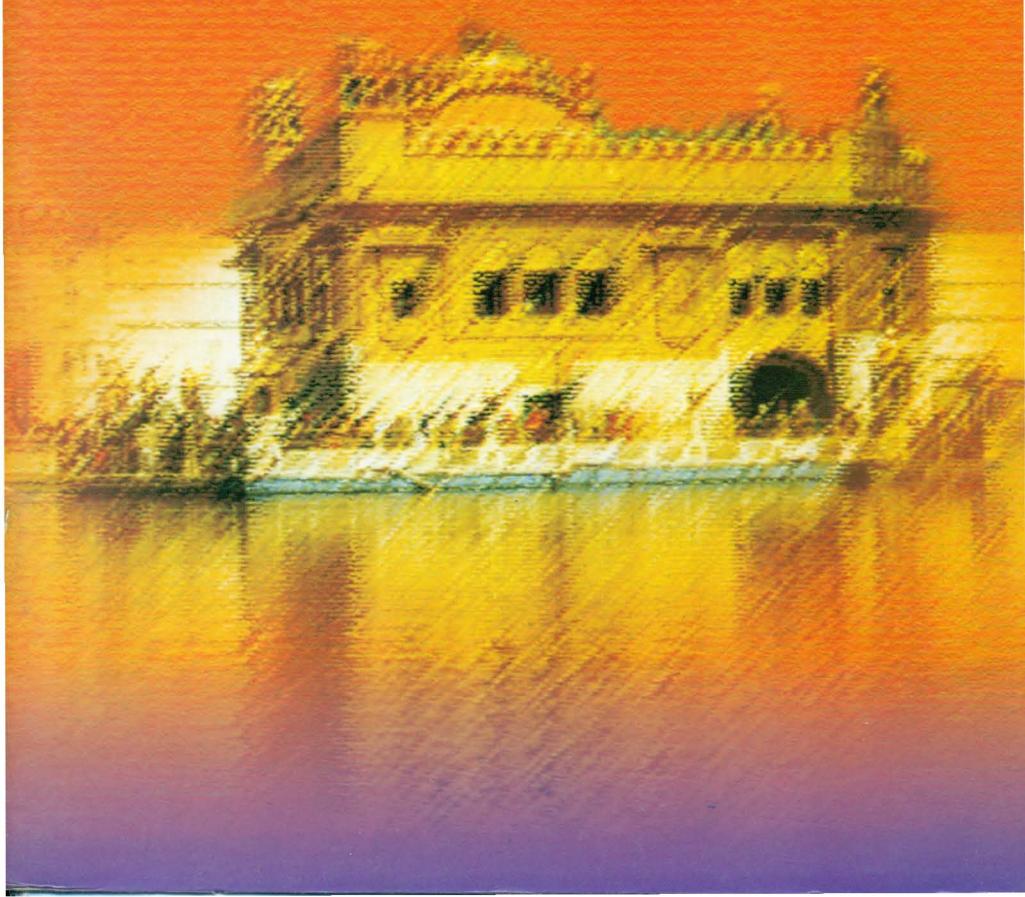




THE ESSENCE OF  
**SIKHISM-8**  
THE LIVES AND TEACHINGS OF  
THE SIKH GURUS





# THE ESSENCE OF SIKHISM-8

THE LIVES AND TEACHINGS OF  
THE SIKH GURUS



Tejinder Kaur Anand, M.A., B.Ed.  
*Former Principal, Guru Nanak Public School*  
*Punjabi Bagh/Pitampura, New Delhi*  
*Former Senior Supervisor, Guru Harkrishan Public School*  
*India Gate, New Delhi*

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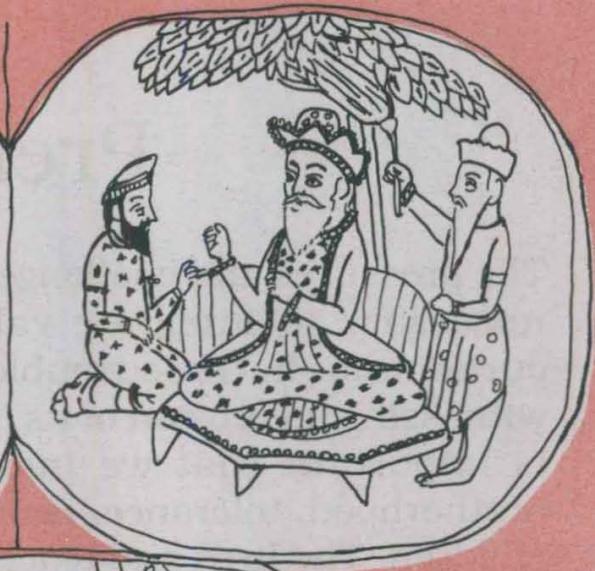
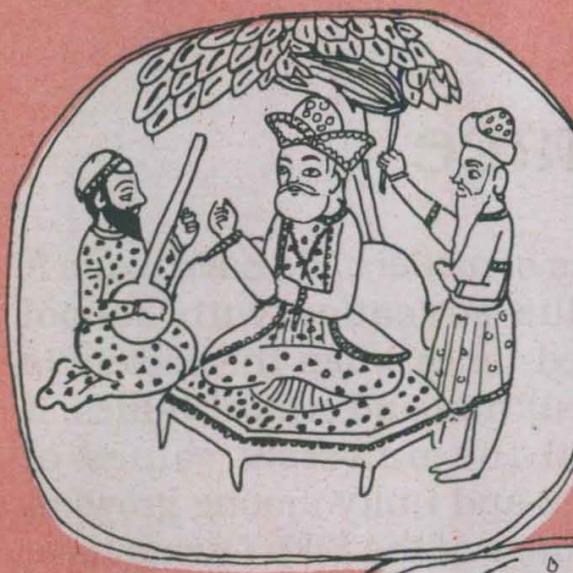
# Preface

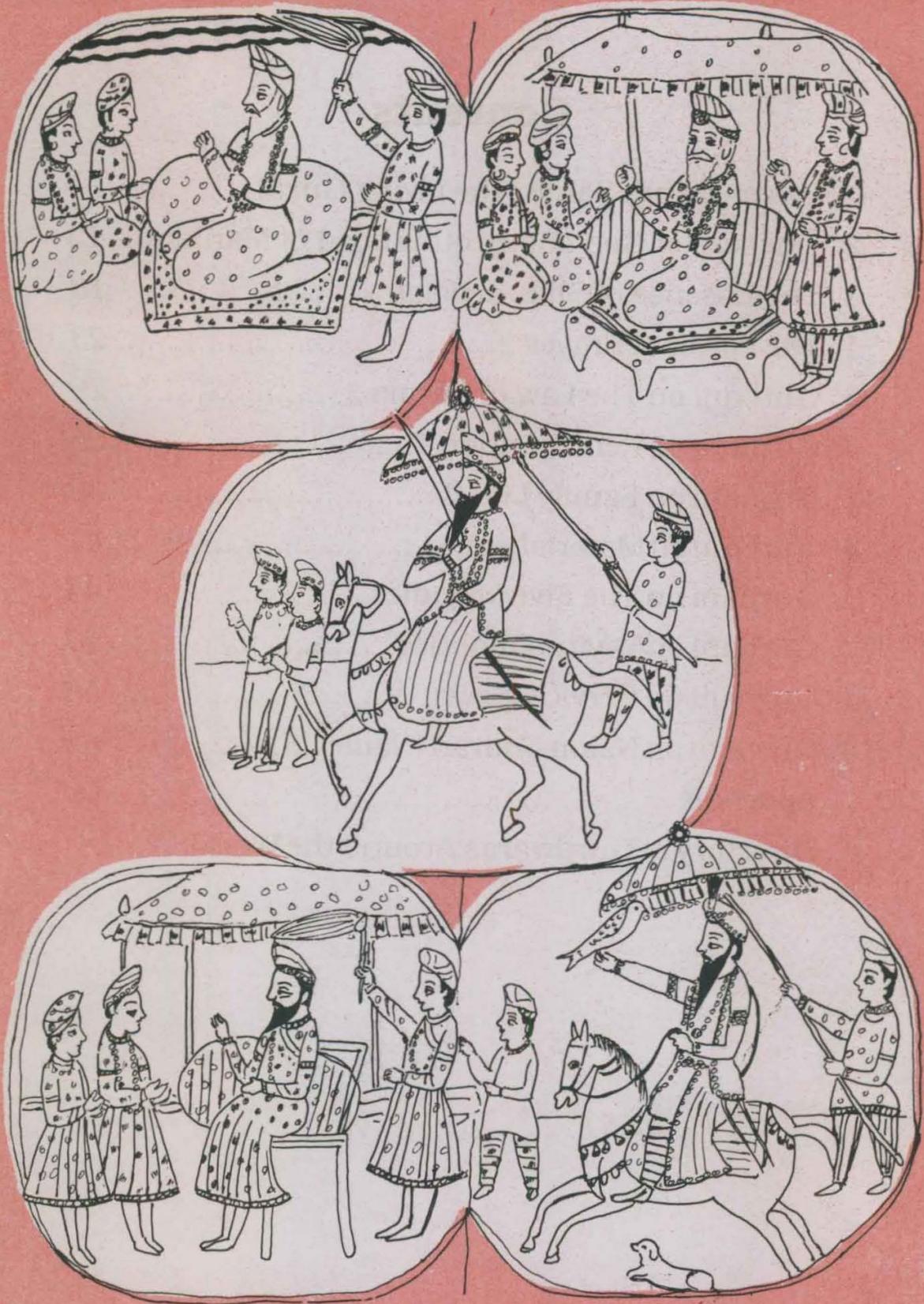
The pressures and challenges of modern life have made it necessary to integrate value education with school curriculum. In these troubled times when the society is witnessing an erosion of its cultural and ethical values, it is important that we instil the universal values of brotherhood, tolerance, peace and unity among growing children. The lives and teachings of the Sikh Gurus have for ages inspired mankind to live life with courage and conviction.

*The Essence of Sikhism* is a well-graded series and gives an account of the lives and teachings of the Sikh Gurus in simple language. Useful exercises help the students to recapitulate the historical setting of events. Interesting activities give them an opportunity to explore the deeper truth enshrined in the teachings of the ten Masters.

For over three decades, I have taught right from tiny tots to higher classes, where young boys and girls are at the threshold of adult life. This series is my humble offering before the eternal Guru, *Guru Granth Sahib*, from the experience of an entire life devoted to education.

*Tejinder Kaur Anand*





Based on a miniature painting depicting the Ten Gurus

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## **1. GURU GRANTH SAHIB (THE LIVING GURU)**

Before leaving the mortal world, Guru Gobind Singh ji told the emotionally disturbed Sikhs, who had assembled around him, that whoever is born must die. He then asked a few Sikhs to bring the Granth Sahib. Granth Sahib ji was brought with great reverence and placed on a raised platform. Guru Gobind Singh ji got up, bowed before it, placed a coconut and a five paise coin before it, called it 'Guru Granth Sahib' and bowed again. Thus he gave the status of Guru to Guru Granth Sahib ji and told the Sikhs to seek their future guidance from it. Bhai Prahlad Singh attributes the following utterance to Guru Gobind Singh ji :

ਆਗਿਆ ਭਈ ਅਕਾਲ ਕੀ ਤਬੀ ਚਲਾਇਓ ਪੰਥ ॥  
ਸਭ ਸਿਖਨ ਕੋ ਹੁਕਮ ਹੈ ਗੁਰੂ ਮਾਨਿਓ ਗੰਗਥ ॥  
ਗੁਰੂ ਗੰਗਥ ਜੀ ਮਾਨਿਓ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਗੁਰਾਂ ਕੀ ਦੇਹ ॥  
ਜੇ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਕੋ ਮਿਲਿਐ ਚਾਹੈ ਖੋਜ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਮਹਿ ਲੇਹ ॥

"On command from the 'Timeless', I have started this 'panth'. All the Sikhs are commanded to regard the 'Granth' as their Guru. Guru Granth Sahib should be regarded as the manifest form of the Guru. Whoever wants to meet the Divine should go deep into its words (Bani)." This is now regularly recited at the third stage of the formal prayer, the 'Ardas', offered at the end of every 'divan' (congregation).

The holy book is now called 'Guru Granth Sahib' (Guru's own book). All the compositions included in it by Guru Arjan Dev ji (the fifth Guru) are treated as 'Gurbani', or the Guru's voice. Whoever reads it attentively, or listens to the hymns, or sings them, is supposed to get into direct contact with the Guru.

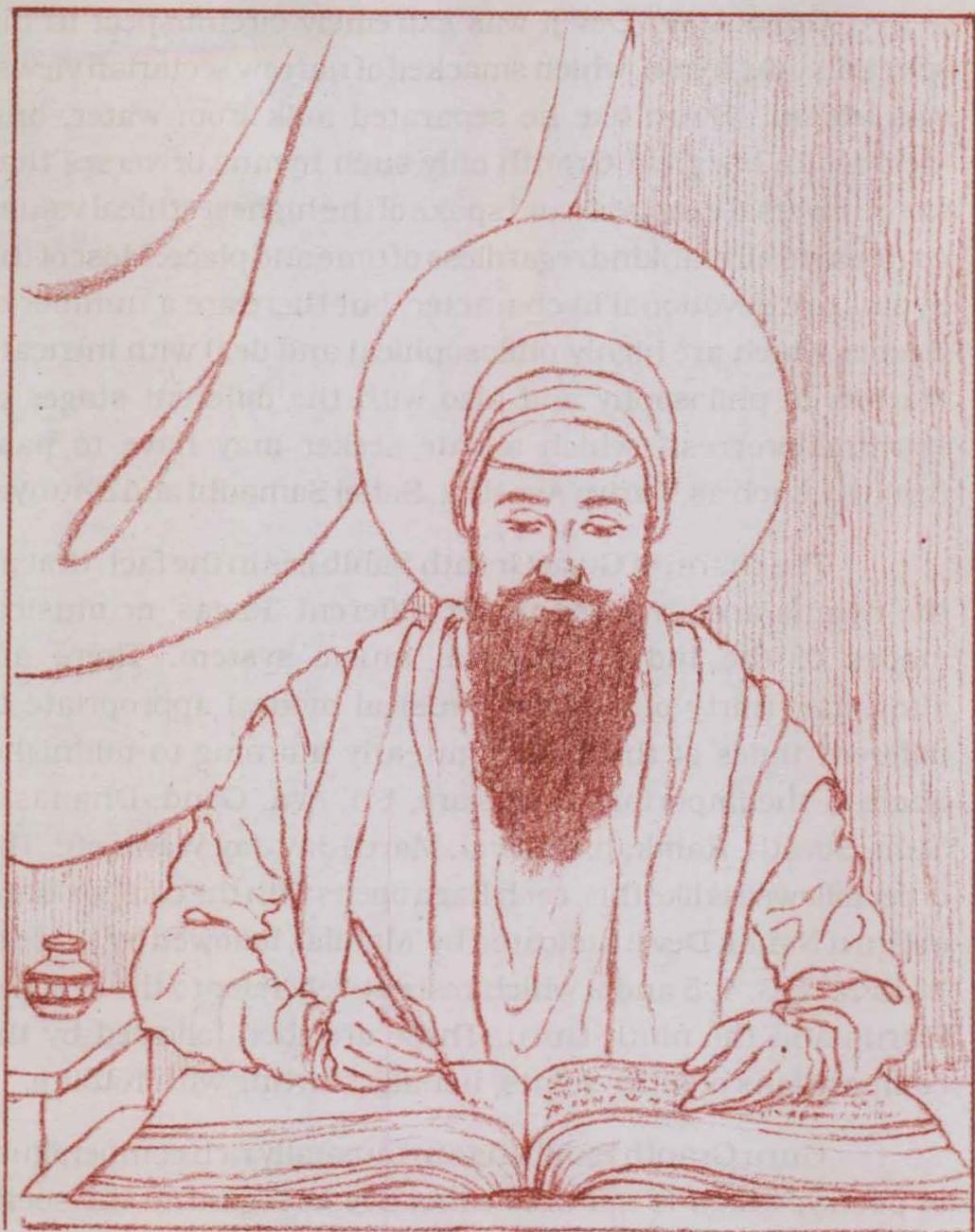
who is regarded as 'incarnate' in these hymns. In fact Guru Arjan Dev ji told the Sikhs to give it the same reverence as they did to him. No distinction is made between the Guru and his Bani (words) :

ਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚਿ ਬਾਣੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਸਾਰੇ ॥  
ਗੁਰੂ ਬਾਣੀ ਕਹੈ ਸੇਵਕੁ ਜਨੁ ਮਾਨੈ ਪਰਤਖਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਿਸਤਾਰੇ ॥੫॥

"The Word is the Guru, and the Guru is the Word. All the nectar is in the Word. The Guru utters and his followers accept it. It is as if the manifest Guru redeems his followers."

It is the usual practice among the Sikhs to open the holy book at random, at the conclusion of every ceremonial function, and read the complete stanza which goes over to the next page. The message contained in the passage so read, is believed to be the Guru's advice (Hukum) to the sangat. It has been the common experience of the Sikhs everywhere, that the advice so taken, proves to be the best counsel. The emphasis is only on the 'content' of the teachings, which either inspires the audience or consoles and guides them. The holy book itself is such a vast storehouse of wisdom, and such a sublime collection of high-class poetry, that it never fails those who put their trust in it.

Guru Granth Sahib is a unique collection of about 3384 hymns, consisting of 15575 stanzas which are spread over 1430 pages. Inspite of the turbulent times through which its compiler, Guru Arjan Dev ji, passed (not forgetting his own martyrdom for the cause of his Guru's universal values of life), he rose above all consideration of religion, language, caste or creed in his selection of the saints whose compositions were included in the Adi Granth. Besides the compositions of the first five Gurus, and of the ninth Guru (Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib, which were later added by Guru Gobind Singh ji), Guru Arjan Dev ji included hymns composed by a number of Hindu and Muslim saints who existed in the



period of 12th century to 17th century A.D. Thus Guru Granth Sahib contains the thoughts of spiritually elevated souls, who spanned nearly five hundred years of medieval India. Their compositions depict their own intense love for God and mankind, through purity of thought, word and deed. A list of the writers, whose verses or selected hymns are included in the Guru Granth Sahib, is given at the end of this chapter.

Guru Arjan Dev ji was extremely circumspect in his selection. Any hymn, which smacked of narrow sectarian views, was left out. Swan like he separated milk from water, and included in his great Granth only such hymns or verses that were universal in appeal, and spoke of the highest ethical values common to all mankind regardless of time and place. Most of the hymns are devotional in character, but there are a number of themes which are highly philosophical and deal with intricate matters of philosophy and also with the different stages of spiritual progress, which a true seeker may have to pass through, such as, Turiya Avastha, Sahej Samadhi and Shunya.

The charm of Guru Granth Sahib lies in the fact, that all the hymns are arranged under different 'Ragas' or musical modes of the Indian classical music system. There are altogether thirty one Ragas (musical modes) appropriate to different times of the day, from early morning to midnight. Some of the important Ragas are, Sri, Asa, Gond, Dhanasri, Suhi, Sorath, Ramkali, Bilawal, Maru, Jay Jay Wanti etc. The order followed is like this, each Raga opens with the compositions of Guru Nanak Dev ji indicated by 'Mahila', followed by those of 'Mahila' 2, 3, 4, 5 and 9 which respectively refer to the first five Gurus and the ninth Guru. These are then followed by the compositions of other saints, usually starting with Kabir ji.

Guru Granth Sahib ji is an unusually rich compendium of poetry, which is not only educative in regard to the social conditions of those times, but also philosophically uplifting and aesthetically satisfying. At the end of it, Guru Arjan Dev ji puts a riddle, 'Mundawani', and invites the reader to probe it:

ਮੁੰਦਾਵਣੀ ੧ ਮਹਲਾ ੫॥  
ਥਾਲ ਵਿਚਿ ਤਿਨਿ ਵਸਤੁ ਪਈਓ ਸਤੁ ਸੰਤੇਖੁ ਵੀਚਾਰੋ ॥  
ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਨਾਮੁ ਠਾਕੁਰ ਕਾ ਪਈਓ ਜਿਸ ਕਾ ਸਭਸੁ ਅਧਾਰੋ ॥  
ਜੇ ਕੋ ਖਾਵੈ ਜੇ ਕੋ ਭੁੰਚੈ ਤਿਸ ਕਾ ਹੋਏ ਉਧਾਰੋ ॥  
ਏਹ ਵਸਤੁ ਤਜੀ ਨਹ ਜਾਈ ਨਿਤ ਨਿਤ ਰਖੁ ਉਠਿ ਧਾਰੋ ॥  
ਤਮ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ ਚਰਨ ਲਗਿ ਤਗੀਐ ਸਭੁ ਨਨਕੁ ਬਹੁਮ ਪਸਾਰੋ ॥੧॥

"In the salver I have placed three things — truth, contentment and enquiry. To these I have added the nectarine Name of the Lord, which is the support of all. Whoever partakes of this dish and digests it, shall be redeemed. This fare cannot be resisted, one should constantly reflect upon it deep in the heart. One crosses this world's darkness (of ignorance) by surrender to an enlightened being, says Nanak. All this (Cosmos) is God's creation."

List of Gurus and saints whose Bani is included in Guru Granth Sahib (in chronological order) :

1. Jaidev, born 1170 - 2 verses
2. Sheikh Farid, born 1173 - 4 shabads and 13 shlokas
3. Trilochan, born 1267 - 4 stanzas
4. Naam Dev, born 1270 - 60 stanzas
5. Ramanand, born 1299 - 1 stanza
6. Sadhna, end 13th century - 1 stanza
7. Beni, end 13th century - 3 stanzas
8. Ravidas, born 1384 - 41 stanzas
9. Kabir ji, born 1398 - 292 stanzas 249 shlokas
10. Dhanna, born 1415 - 4 stanzas
11. Pipa, born 1425 - 1 stanza
12. Sen, born early 15th century - 1 stanza
13. Parmanand, end early 16th century - 1 stanza
14. Surdas, born 1478 - 1 verse
15. Bhikhan, end 1574 - 2 stanzas
16. Bhai Mardana, born 1459 - 3 shlokas
17. Guru Nanak Dev, born 1469 - 974 stanzas and shlokas
18. Guru Angad Dev, born 1504 - 62 shlokas
19. Guru Amardas, born 1479 - 907 stanzas and shlokas
20. Guru Ram Das, born 1534 - 679 stanzas and shlokas
21. Guru Arjan Dev, born 1563 - 2218 stanzas and shlokas
22. Guru Tegh Bahadur, born 1622 - 115 stanzas and shlokas

23. Guru Gobind Singh, born 1666 - 1 shloka
24. Baba Sunder, 16th Century - 6 stanzas
25. Satta Doom and Rai Balwant, mid 16th century - 8 stanzas

In addition to the above, 123 'Swayyas' (Panegyrics) sung by the Bhatts (bards), in the court of various Gurus are also included.

### **How Much Do You Remember?**

#### I. Answer the following questions:

1. What did Guru Gobind Singh do before leaving the mortal world?
2. Why is Guru Granth Sahib treated as Guru's voice?
3. How is 'Hukum' taken and what is its significance?
4. What was the criteria adopted by Guru Arjan Dev ji while selecting the hymns for Guru Granth Sahib?
5. Where does the charm of Guru Granth Sahib lie?
6. Write in Punjabi the riddle (Mundawani) put by Guru Arjan Dev ji at the end of Guru Granth Sahib and explain its meaning in your own words.

#### II. Something to do

1. Read about the life of Guru Arjan Dev ji and his martyrdom. Collect material and photographs and make a poster for your classroom.
2. Besides including the hymns of the Sikh Gurus in Guru Granth Sahib, Guru Arjan Dev ji included the compositions of Hindu and Muslim saints. Discuss in the class the moral lesson we draw from it.

## **2. ONENESS OF GOD AND BROTHERHOOD OF MANKIND**

At the point of time when Guru Nanak Dev ji appeared on the Indian panorama, Hindu society was divided into castes. Hindu religion, inspite of its splendid heritage and rich philosophical content, had in practice, degenerated into mere ritualism. The Hindu sages and yogis had retreated to the forests, mountains and caves seeking salvation for themselves. They practised self denial and underwent purposeless physical austerities to realize God, and were immune to the misery prevailing in the society.

Guru Nanak Dev ji witnessed the inhuman treatment meted out to the Indians by the ruling Mughal invaders, who looked upon them with sheer contempt, which is usually the attitude of a ruler towards vanquished people who hardly put up any resistance. Many had resorted to the performance of yagyas, and to prayers in temples, to ward off invasion, invoking their God's wrath on the invaders. Loyalty to the country, and the will to suffer in its defence, was completely missing. Sense of patriotism was conspicuously absent. Some of the Indians went to the extent of following the customs, habits, dress and diet of the invaders, to please the new rulers. Guru Nanak Devji was shocked to see the condition of his fellow countrymen at Aminabad, and protested strongly against it.

Guru Nanak Dev ji did not have an army with which he could fight the injustice of the oppressors, but he decided to sow the seed of self-respect and love for humanity amongst the people. He believed in the inherent goodness of human beings. He toured the length and breadth of the country, even going beyond its frontiers, to reach the high and low and to free the people from the bondage of ignorance, superstition, prejudice, arrogance, selfishness, envy and greed. This, he thought, would

strengthen the moral fiber of his countrymen and bring the best out of them. He laid tremendous stress on moral values and self discipline. He felt that unless people were encouraged and motivated to accept and practise high morals, the political freedom of the country could not be achieved. He decided to work for the spiritual emancipation of his people by strengthening their minds and bringing about a revolutionary change in their way of thinking.

Guru Nanak Dev ji believed and preached in the oneness of God, Ek Onkar (One manifest in diversity) and the brotherhood of mankind. He described 'God' as 'Sargun' as well as 'Nirgun', that is, with, as well as without attributes. As 'Nirgun', God is formless, fearless, unborn, self effulgent, infinite and eternal. This, he believed, was the truth and said it would ever remain so. But in the 'Sargun' state, God had manifested himself in creation. He was present everywhere and in everything. He had revealed Himself in the whole nature (qudrat), and in the entire cosmos. It was He who had created the world with its mountains, valleys, deep seas, sun, moon and stars. He was present in the various hues and aromas of nature, in the songs of the birds and in manifold animals, blooming flowers and all that makes up life's kaleidoscope. The universe depends entirely on His will, as is stated in 'Asa Di War' :

ਦੁਜੀ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਸਜੀਐ ॥ ਕਰਿ ਆਸਣੁ ਡਿਠੇ ਚਾਉ ॥

"He created nature and seating Himself in its center, watches with delight, its play."

ਅਪੇ ਪਟੀ ਕਲਮ ਆਪਿ ਉਪਰਿ ਲੇਖੁ ਭਿ ਢੂੰ ॥  
ਏਕੋ ਕਹੀਐ ਨਾਨਕ (ਨਾਨਕਾ) ਦੂਜਾ ਕਹੇ ਕੁ ॥੨॥

"He is the tablet, he is the pen also, the writing on it too, says Nanak; He alone is and there is none other."

ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਹੈ ਸੋਇ ॥ ਤਿਸਦੇ ਚਾਨਣੀਂ ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਹੋਇ ॥

"He is the light that lights everything."

This concept of oneness of all creation has far reaching implications. Not only was the unity and sanctity of all life advocated; all forms of life, high and low, were considered equal. If we believe sincerely in the oneness of God, then exploitation of anything by man in any form or way is wrong, as God is present in the highest as well as the lowest.

ਨਾਨਕ ਵੇਚਾਰਾ ਕਿਆ ਕਰੈ ॥ ਸਭ ਲੋਕ ਸਲਾਹੇ ਏਕਮੈ ॥

"What can humble Nanak say when all men have been made equal."

All economic and political exploitation would end, if we started believing in the concept of brotherhood of mankind. Guru Nanak Dev ji wanted to abolish inequality amongst human beings through his teachings. There was no high and no low caste, except men with high moral values or with low sinful inclinations. He was out to harmonize all differences. For him His worship implied service of humanity. In reality it meant the end of poverty, ignorance, disease and inequality of opportunity. Guru Sahib believed that if the social consciousness of the people could be awakened, the differences between man and man on account of caste, creed, race or status would be automatically obliterated.

Thus the Sikh community was first fed on the philosophy of equality for a few generations and then united in the brotherhood by the last Guru, Guru Gobind Singh ji, when he bound the community together through baptism (Amrit Chakhana). Anyone could join the Sikh brotherhood, irrespective of sex, vocation, caste, creed, colour or race. Any five Sikhs could perform the ceremony of baptism so that no particular priestly class was allowed to emerge.

It was no doubt a revolutionary step in our country, where for centuries a vast section of its people had been treated

as slaves or untouchables on the basis of caste distinctions. Somehow, rightly or wrongly, the caste system had gained the sanction of holy men and some scriptures. The concept of untouchability had taken such a strong hold on the minds of the people that Gandhi ji had to fight against it even in modern times. But Guru Nanak Dev ji and the following Gurus had condemned it and tried to weed it out from the society, centuries ago :

ਜਾਣੁ ਜੋਤਿ ਨ ਪੁਛਹੁ ਜਾਤੀ ਆਗੇ ਜਾਤਿ ਨਹੋ ॥੧॥

"Judge a man because of his inner light and not by his caste, for no caste is taken into account in the next world."

The fifth Guru Arjan Dev ji expressed his views thus :

ਏਕੁ ਪਿਤਾ ਏਕਸ ਕੇ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਿਕ ॥

"We all have a common father (God) and thus we all are brothers."

Guru Gobind Singh ji, the tenth Guru, in the Akal Ustat, says :

ਏਕੇ ਨੈਨ ਏਕੇ ਕਾਨ ਏਕੇ ਦੇਹ ਏਕੇ ਬਾਨ ॥  
ਖਾਕ ਬਾਦ ਆਤਿਸ ਅੋ ਆਬ ਕੇ ਰਲਾਓ ਹੈ ॥

"All have the same kind of eyes, ears, body and builds, made of the same elements of earth, fire and water. So there is no difference amongst human beings."

There are scores of verses in Guru Granth Sahib which speak against the distinctions that divide society. Even differences in forms and modes of worship are not important.

Guru Gobind Singh ji explained :

ਦੇਹੁਰਾ ਅੋ ਮਸੀਤ ਸੋਈ ਪੂਜਾ ਅੋ ਨਿਮਾਜ਼ ਓਈ ॥  
ਮਾਨਸ ਸਬੈ ਏਕ ਪੈ ਅਨੇਕ ਕੇ ਭ੍ਰਮਾਓ ਹੈ ॥

"Temple and mosque are the same, 'Pooja' (Hindu way of worship), and 'Namaaz' (Muslim way of praying) are the same. All mankind is one and differences are due to misconceptions."

Expressed in a similar manner are Kabir ji's thoughts on the same subject :

ਏਕ ਨੂਰ ਤੇ ਸਭ ਜਗ ਉਪਜਿਆ ਕਉਣ ਭਲੈ ਕੇ ਮੰਦੇ ॥

"God created light. All are bound by nature that manifested from it. From the light, the entire world sprang into being. There is no high, no low."

Thus from the first Guru to the tenth Guru and the Bhagats, all preached that all mankind is one and every human being should be treated with respect. Men must be judged only by their deeds.

### **How Much Do You Remember?**

I. Answer the following questions:

1. What was the condition of the Hindu society when Guru Nanak Dev ji appeared on the scene of India?
2. What was the attitude of the Mughal invaders towards Indians?
3. What did Guru Nanak Dev ji do to rectify the situation prevalent in the country?
4. How did Guru Nanak Dev ji describe God?
5. 'He was out to harmonize all differences.' Explain the statement in your words.
6. Write in your words the revolutionary steps taken by the Sikh Gurus.

II. Something to do

The teacher to organize a debate on 'Oneness of God' and 'Brotherhood of Mankind.'

### **3. THE ESSENCE OF SIKH RELIGION**

The word 'Religion' originated from Latin, and means, 'that which binds back or unites.' Religion is thus supposed to be a unifying force. It has a double connotation — one, that it helps in joining the individual soul to the Supreme Soul, God; and two, it gives rise to love for humanity at large. Religion is meant to bring about better understanding of one's self and of other human beings. This means that any religion worth its name must fulfill the above requirements and contribute towards this twofold goal. The history of religion is associated with the appearance of sages, seers, Gurus, Avatars and Prophets who came to guide humanity on to the right path, according to the needs of the time and place. But the source remains the same. Thus all religions may have different approaches, but they lead to the same Divine Reality.

Guru Nanak Dev ji was very clear about these concepts and believed explicitly in the oneness of God and brotherhood of mankind. He travelled far and wide throughout the country and even went beyond its borders to distant lands to convey his message of love and compassion. He was accepted by the Hindus and Muslims alike as a representative of God who had revealed Himself in human form to guide humanity.

According to Guru Nanak Dev ji, God resides in the heart of every human being and realizing His presence was his religion. It did not matter to him whether one was a Hindu or a Mussalman. He himself was often asked the same question as to which religious denomination he belonged to. His reply was often that he was 'Nanak Nirankari' — meaning that he belonged to the formless God, and his religion was that of the formless. On his reappearance from the river Beni after three days, he stated

that there was no Hindu and no Mussalman. It meant that after his enlightenment, the whole of humanity appeared to him as one. He was in a state of perfect harmony with the Lord. All worldly differences had disappeared for him because he was filled by a divine love for all. Such a statement was naturally resented and challenged by the Qazi and the Muslim ruler of Sultanpur. He was immediately sent for, to explain what he meant by that kind of blasphemous talk. He boldly told the Nawab and the Qazi that a true Muslim was one who had the following qualities :

ਮਹੇਰ ਮਸੀਤਿ ਸਿਦਕੁ ਮੁਸਲਾ ਹਕੁ ਹਲਾਲੁ ਕੁਗਣੁ ॥  
ਸਰਮ ਸੁਨਤਿ ਸੀਲੁ ਰੋਜਾ ਹੋਹੁ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ॥  
ਕਰਣੀ ਕਾਬਾ ਸਚੁ ਪੀਰੁ ਕਲਮਾ ਕਰਮ ਨਿਵਾਜੁ ॥  
ਤਸਬੀ ਸਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵਸੀ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਖੈ ਲਾਜੁ ॥੧॥

"Let compassion be thy mosque, faith thy prayer mat, honest living thy Quran, humility thy circumcision and good conduct thy Kaaba, truth thy Pir (the perfect master) and kindness thy Kalma (recitation), Rosary be thy acceptance of the Divine Will. That will protect your honour before the Lord, says Nanak, and you will be regarded as a true Muslim."

Further in the hymn, he goes on to warn the Hindus and the Muslims, that to snatch away someone else's rightful possession is sacrilege for a Hindu like eating the forbidden cow's meat, and for the Muslim the forbidden pork meat.

Guru Nanak Dev ji laid tremendous stress on the character of a person. He felt that it did not matter to which religion one belonged, but what really mattered was truthful living, as stated in the following line:

ਸਚਹੁ ਉਰੈ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਉਪਰਿ ਸਚੁ ਆਚਾਰੁ ॥੫॥

"Truth is higher than everything, but higher still is truthful living."



The Gurus felt that religion must result in the uplifting of human mind and help fill the human heart with love, compassion and goodness. They insisted that people should not create narrow communal walls, which always lead to conflicts and misery. Instead, they felt that formal religion was not a thing to be emphasized beyond a certain point, as all religions were different ways to realize the same Supreme Reality. Thus religions should not oppose each other but should supplement each other.

The Sikh Gurus made no distinction between men. They advised all to watch their deeds in the mirror of their hearts in relation to the teachings of their own masters. It did not matter to them who or how one worshipped. What really mattered was how devoted, sincere and pure a person was and whether he was prepared to surrender completely to the will of God while praying. Guru Nanak Dev ji reprimanded the Qazi and the Nawab of Sultanpur when their thoughts were somewhere else while performing 'Namaaz' (Muslim way of praying) in the mosque.

Guru Nanak Dev ji appealed to Hindus, not to lose the essence of religion in mere rituals. He did not believe in outer marks at all; the tilak or rubbing of ashes on the bodies by the yogis. Such signs seemed meaningless to him. He advised the yogis of Gorakh Nath to make humility and modesty their begging bowl and the Lord's name their ashes. According to him a true seeker or Brahmin was one who bathed in God's wisdom and meditated on His Name.

This cathalocism and message of universality is exemplified by the fact that Muslim fakir Hazrat Mian Mir, the representative of the Caliph of Baghdad in India, was invited to lay down the foundation stone of the most sacred temple of the Sikhs, the Golden Temple at Amritsar, by Guru Arjan Dev ji. Guru Arjan Dev ji, as well as Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib, non-violently submitted to the tortures inflicted upon them by the Mughal rulers and sacrificed their lives to protect an individual's right to follow his own religion and his own way of worshipping God. Pir Budhu Shah of Sadaura fought on the side of Guru Gobind Singh ji with seven hundred of his followers and sacrificed his two sons in the battle. Many other Muslims and Pathans served in the army of Guru Gobind Singh ji as they believed that he was fighting for righteousness. Two Pathan brothers helped him to escape from the clutches of the Mughal army by carrying him in a palanquin as a Muslim pir.

Thus we can see that according to the Sikh Gurus, what was really important was virtue, honesty, humility, love and devotion to God. These qualities helped man to achieve God realization. They wanted people to forsake pride, ego, greed, pettiness, jealousy and hatred, as these characteristics took man away from God.

### **How Much Do You Remember?**

I. Answer the following questions:

1. What does the word 'religion' mean?
2. What did Guru Nanak Dev ji mean when he said, "There is no Hindu and no Mussalman"?
3. Write in your own words the description given by Guru Nanak Dev ji of a true Muslim?
4. What did Guru Nanak Dev ji tell Hindus to do?
5. How did the Sikh Gurus convey the message of universality by their own conduct and example?

II. Fill in the blanks:

1. The history of religion is associated with the appearance of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and Prophets.
2. According to Guru Nanak Dev ji, God resides in the heart of every \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Guru Nanak Dev ji often called himself \_\_\_\_\_
4. Guru Nanak Dev ji reprimanded the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ of Sultanpur.
5. According to the Sikh Gurus what was really important was \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, love and \_\_\_\_\_ to God.

## **4. THE POWER OF PRAYER**

If we were to trace the history of prayer, it would take us back to the beginning of civilization. The primitive man had started praying with the realization that there was some supernatural power which controlled the cosmos and the nature. He faced the nature's harsh elements and could not understand its working. He felt frightened, believing that some powerful spirit was hidden behind them. When there was disease, drought, earthquake or floods, he felt that certain demoniac powers controlled the nature and had to be appeased with prayer or sacrifice. On the other hand, when the weather was fine, rains were in plenty and he had enough food and fire to cook it, he felt grateful. He began to worship the elements such as the Sun God, Rain God etc. Offerings and sacrifices were made to them to please the Gods, so that he was blessed and the fair weather continued. This fear of nature's unkind elements and ignorance of their working, made him create Gods which represented nature.

With the passage of time and the progress of civilization, new Gods replaced the old ones. The mystery of life and death confused him and confronted him with problems which were beyond his understanding. At a certain point of time, worship of ancestors came into practice. The priestly class took full advantage of the ignorance of the people and exploited them at the time of death of their relatives and even afterwards. Payment in the form of cash or kind was extorted from the innocent on the plea of feeding their ancestors.

Later the worship of the strong man or the king came into practice, because the favours from him meant prosperity and vice versa. To fulfill their daily needs and wants, the

people placed him on a pedestal, and began to worship him. But even that changed, and it was replaced by the worship of the good and the wise man. Such a person became the model to emulate. Due to his innate wisdom and knowledge, and superior mode of thinking, he was able to answer their queries and solve their problems or give correct direction to them. That was the age of seers and sages (rishis and munis). They were even looked up to by the strong and powerful kings, and their advice was sought before any important event. With the appearance of godly persons from time to time, in the form of Avatars, Prophets and Satgurus in different parts of the world, the concept of God underwent a complete change. They described the Supreme Spirit as omnipotent and omnipresent. According to them, God was diffused through all matter and nature. He was the Creator and had manifested Himself in innumerable forms.

Thus the mode of prayer changed from time to time as per the understanding and mental make-up of the people. Guru Nanak Dev ji appeared on the Indian scene in the second half of the 15th century and left an indelible mark on the minds of the people. He proved to be a saviour sent by Providence to guide the people of our country on to the right path and to give them correct direction. His words provided a kind of peace, contentment and happiness which was never experienced before. He was an epitome of humility, and showed love for one and all without any distinction whatsoever. Guru Nanak Dev ji felt that the past religious heritage of India had been corroded due to superficial and meaningless rituals. The common people were being exploited and misled by the priestly class, which had become money-minded, selfish and greedy. As a result, the essence of religion was lost in mere formal practices. Guru Nanak Dev ji took upon himself to show the right way to the people. He tried to show the shallowness of certain practices in a simple way. At Haridwar, when people facing the sun were throwing water to their ancestors while standing in the river Ganges, he started doing the same with his back towards the

sun. When questioned, he simply told them that he was sending water to his fields back home. But when the people said that it was not possible, he countered and exposed the futility of their action by saying that if water could reach their ancestors, then why not his fields, which were much nearer? Even at Jagannath Puri, after attending the 'aarti' in the temple, Guru Nanak Dev Ji sang the hymn about how nature itself was singing the praises of the Lord above:

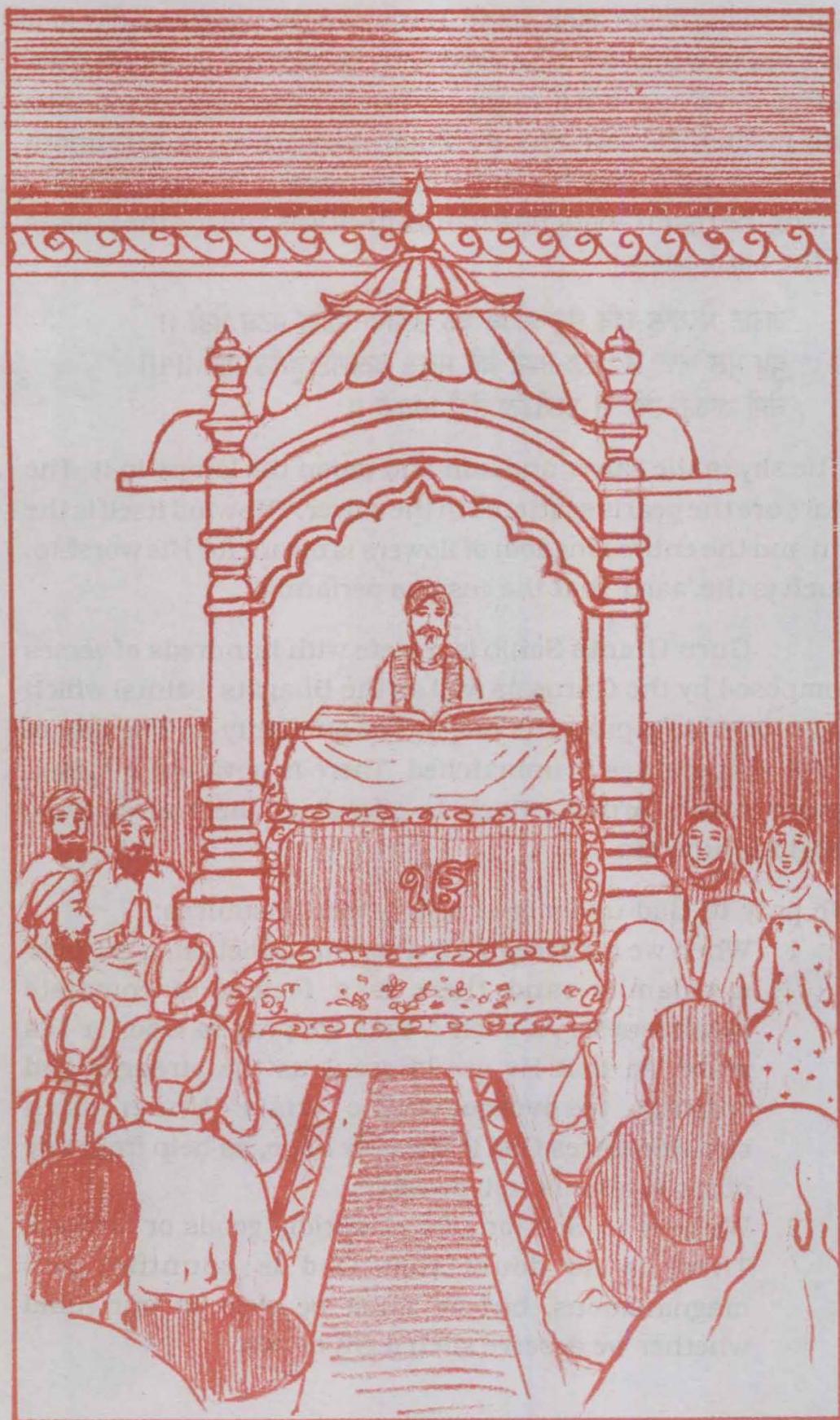
ਗਗਨ ਮੈ ਬਾਲੁ ਰਵਿ ਚੰਦੁ ਦੀਪਕ ਬਨੇ ਤਾਰਿਕਾ ਮੰਡਲ ਜਨਕ ਮੇਤੀ ॥  
ਪ੍ਰਾਪੁ ਮਲ ਆਨ ਲੇ ਪਵਣੁ ਚਵਰੇ ਕਰੇ ਸਗਲੁ ਬਨਰਾਇ ਫੁਲੰਤ ਜੋਤੀ ॥੧॥  
ਕੈਸੀ ਆਰਤੀ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਭਵਖੰਡਨਾ ਤੇਰੀ ਆਰਤੀ ॥

"The sky is the salver and sun and moon the lamps in it. The stars are the pearls scattered in the salver. The wind itself is the fan and the entire kingdom of flowers is meant for His worship. Such is the 'aarti' that the cosmos performs."

Guru Granth Sahib is replete with hundreds of verses composed by the Gurus as well as the Bhagats (saints) which are uttered in a prayerful mood. The sublimity and beauty of these outpourings is unmatched. There is however, a formal prayer called 'Ardas', which is offered at the end of every religious function.

We pray to God under four sets of circumstances:

1. When we are faced with a serious affliction, a crisis or a calamity, and there is a feeling of complete helplessness. At such a time we pray to God for His grace, so that He would grant us the strength and courage to overcome the crisis. Under such circumstances God is the only hope, as help from any other source is not possible.
2. We pray to God for gifts of worldly goods or favours. There is no doubt that God is bountiful and magnanimous, but we must be clear in our mind whether we deserve such a gift or not.



3. A spiritually advanced soul prays for knowledge about the mystery of life and has no other selfish motive. Such a prayer is always answered.
4. One who has realized God is always in a prayerful mood. His soul is always on its knees.

Thus prayer is a necessity of the human heart and mind. Life is much too vast, and compared to it an individual is much too insignificant. Even in our daily life we seek help and guidance from those who are better placed or have superior knowledge than ourselves. Then why not pray to that invisible Supreme Spirit which runs the entire cosmic order?

There are, however, a few conditions that must be fulfilled before a prayer is answered:

1. One must have faith in the existence of God.
2. One must have the conviction that the prayer will be heard.
3. One must have the confidence in the legitimacy of the purpose of prayer.
4. Lastly, it must be made with utter sincerity and spirit of surrender.

When this is done, Gurbani says:

ਬਿਰਥੀ ਕਦੇ ਨਾ ਹੋਵਈ ਜਨ ਕੀ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ ॥

"The prayer of a true person will never go in vain."

ਜੇਤੇ ਕਹੈ ਠਾਕੁਰ ਪਹਿ ਸੈਵਕੁ ਤਤਕਾਲ ਹੋਈ ਆਵੇ ॥

"Whatever a God's servant seeks from the Master, that shall be fulfilled instantly."

However, one must never forget that man's own vision is limited. Sometimes prayers are not granted, because the Divine knows that it is not in our best interests. If the motive is unclean, evil and selfish, prayer will never be answered, as He knows better than anyone:

ਅਪੇ ਜਾਣੇ ਅਪੇ ਦੇਇ॥

"He knows best whom to give."

Once the realization comes that everything about life is transient and fleeting, and therefore not worth praying for, it means advancement in one's evaluations.

ਕਿਆ ਮਾਗਉ ਕਿਛੁ ਬਿਰੁ ਨ ਰਹਾਈ ॥

"Nothing is stable, what should I ask for?"

Thus the highest form of prayer is to ask for merger of one's self with the Divine. If one achieves that, everything else loses its importance. After that there is eternal bliss.

### **How Much Do You Remember?**

#### I. Answer the following questions:

1. Why did the primitive man pray?
2. When did he feel grateful?
3. What kind of Gods did the primitive man create?
4. What happened when the worship of ancestors came into practice?
5. Why did man start worshipping the wise men?
6. What happened with the appearance of godly persons on earth?
7. When did Guru Nanak Dev ji appear on the Indian scene?
8. Why did Guru Nanak Dev ji feel that the past religious heritage had been corroded?
9. What happened at Haridwar?
10. When do we really pray to God?

#### II. Something to do

The teacher should find out from the students whether they pray or not. If the answer is positive from most of them, then she/he could ask them when do they pray and what do they pray for.

## 5. GURBANI ON THE LAW OF KARMA

The Law of Karma is the law of cause and effect, of action and reaction. It is extremely important to understand the true implication of this law. Life is full of actions and full of activity. It is the approach to this activity which determines our destiny; in it are included past, present and future. The life at the sub-human level is guided only by natural instincts, while man has been given the capacity to reflect from which is born the sense of discretion. He has the freedom of choice, and in this freedom lies the way to escape from 'awaa gavan' (coming and going) that is, the law of transmigration. Gurbani says:

' ਕਰਮੀ ਆਵੈ ਕਪੜਾ ਨਦਰੀ ਮੋਖੁ ਦੁਆਰੁ ॥

It means that, "The body itself (which is a garment of soul) is attained because of deeds done, and the emancipation from it comes through Grace."

The Grace has to be earned through good deeds. The embodied soul is separated from the Divine because of the deeds done in the previous lives.

ਜੈਹਾ ਬੀਜੈ ਸੋ ਲੁਣੇ ਜੋ ਖਟੇ ਸ੍ਰੇ ਖਾਇ ॥

"You reap what you sow. You eat what you earn."

This line of thinking is repeated in several places in Gurbani:

ਜੇਹੇ ਕਰਮ ਕਮਾਇ ਤੇਹਾ ਹੋਇਸੀ ॥

"He will become according to what he does."

ਅਪੇ ਬੀਜਿ ਅਪੇ ਹੀ ਖਾਹੁ ॥

"You eat whatever you sow."

ਦਿਨੁ ਗੈਨਿ ਅਪਨਾ ਕੀਆ ਪਾਈ ॥  
ਕਿਸੁ ਦੇਸੁ ਨ ਦੀਜੈ ਕਿਰਤੁ ਭਵਾਈ ॥੫॥

"Day and night you get what you deserve. You can blame no one; you are caught in the rounds because of your deeds."

ਦਦੈ ਦੇਸੁ ਨ ਦੇਉ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੇਸੁ ਕਰਮਾ ਆਪਣਿਆ ॥  
ਜੇ ਮੈ ਕੀਆ ਸੋ ਮੈ ਪਾਇਆ ਦੇਸੁ ਨ ਦੀਜੈ ਅਵਰ ਜਨਾ ॥੨॥

"Why blame others? I must blame my own deeds, for I have got the fruit of what I had sown. No one else should be blamed for what happens to me."

In fact it is the motive behind the action which determines its course as well as its consequence. If the motive is entirely selfish and seeks to promote one's own benefit at the cost of others, it will be fraught with bad consequences. If the motive is clean and does not seek to harm the interests of others, it will be beneficial to all, including oneself. Our actions determine our character which, in turn, lays the foundation of our destiny. Law of Karma is in fact a law of justice and fair play. This law does not stop operating at any time, not even on death, because death only means destruction of the body and not the evolving soul. The rewards and punishments for good or bad deeds are awarded by the Divine, in His own wisdom and at His own time, as Gurbani says:

ਮੰਦਾ ਚੰਗਾ ਆਪਣਾ ਅਪੇ ਹੀ ਕੀਤਾ ਪਾਵਣਾ ॥

"The good or the bad actions of a man are responsible for his present state."

No doubt that there is no escape from the Law of Karma, the chain reaction of cause and effect. But let us not confuse it with helplessness and fatality. If a man can create destiny, he can also change it, as he is not only the product of past but moulder of future too. The human will and determination to be good and positive can lead to the weakening of the past bad Karmas with the grace of God:

ਗਲਤ ਤਿਨਾ ਦੀ ਕਦੀ ਕਿਆ ਕਰੇ  
ਜੇ ਆਪਿ ਬਖਸ਼ੇ ਕਰਤਾਰਿ ॥

"No count of Karmas of a person would matter if He decided to bless him."

Sometimes we are apt to be misled by observing immoral and unethical people having a prosperous time, while honest and virtuous ones go through suffering. This is a superficial understanding. The reward of a virtuous life may not be a life of ease, comfort or luxury, but a state of happiness, which is far more important than material comforts and luxury. When you closely peep into the lives of the people who have acted wickedly and are seemingly having a good time, you will discover that in terms of real happiness, their life is not so rosy. They will be passing through unusual tensions and anxieties which rob them of their peace of mind. They may be involved in endless squabbles, litigations, police cases or physical suffering, which no amount of wealth can cure. Could they be happy?

The Sikh Gurus have, throughout their teachings, laid tremendous emphasis on leading a morally upright life, a life of integrity, truthfulness and nobility. When calamity comes, it is no use blaming it on Almighty; it is only our own deeds done in the past that are bearing fruit.

### **How should one approach Karma or action in life?**

The right attitude is: do your duty with integrity and devotion and leave the consequences to the Divine. This would rid you of duality of hope and despair (aasa and niraasa).

Guru Nanak Dev ji says:

ਆਸਾ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਰਹੈ ਨਿਰਆ ਤੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਏਕ ਮਿਲੈ ॥੫॥

"Remaining hopeful but expecting nothing in particular, one may even realize the One Lord."

While doing the daily duties, dedicate your actions to God. When we start accepting the fact that everything is happening as per the will of God (Bhana), the misery disappears from life. What really happens is, that our desires give rise to our thoughts, which in turn determine our actions. If this is understood, viz., that the future can be moulded, that our circumstances, capacities and opportunities depend on our deeds; that our present is the consequence of what we did in the past and our future will depend upon what we do in the present, we would be very careful while performing our actions. Thus whoever thinks of other's welfare while doing his own work, in fact ensures his own welfare and happiness.

### **How Much Do You Remember?**

#### I. Answer the following questions:

1. What is the Law of Karma?
2. What is the difference between the life at sub-human level and at human level?
3. How does the motive behind the action determine the consequence?
4. Why is the Law of Karma called the law of justice?
5. How can man change his destiny?
6. Why are we sometimes misled that immoral people are having a good time?
7. How should one approach Karma or action in life?

#### II. Something to do

The teacher should initiate a lively discussion in the class on the Law of Karma.

## 6. GURBANI ON RENUNCIATION — I

For centuries the common belief prevalent amongst yogis and seers was, that one could realize God only by complete dissociation from society. They believed that no contemplative life was possible while living in the midst of worldly affairs, as it led to hope, fear, desire, hate, jealousy and attachment. Thus they felt that no spiritual progress was possible while living in the society. Therefore in pursuance of this philosophy of life, they took to the mountains, caves or forests. They would smear their bodies with ashes, beg for alms, visit places of pilgrimage and delve in yogic exercises to achieve the goal of self-realization or God-realization.

But Guru Nanak Dev ji regarded such an approach to spiritual advancement as escapism. In a long passage on the means of achieving 'yog', that is, union with the Divine, which was specifically addressed to the yogis, he pointed out:

ਜੋਗੁ ਨਾ ਬਿੰਦਾ ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਡੱਡੇ ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਭਸਮ ਚੜਾਈਐ ॥  
ਅੰਜਨ ਮਾਹਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨਿ ਰਹੀਐ ਜੋਗ ਜੂਗਤਿ ਇਵ ਪਾਈਐ ॥੧॥

"Union is achieved not through wearing tattered clothes, carrying a staff or besmearing one's body with ashes. It is achieved by remaining pure amidst impurities of life."

The essence of the message was to achieve purity of the mind in the midst of impurities of life, through the understanding of the causes which produced impurities, and the manner in which one could rise above them.

In the words of Kabir ji:

ਨਗਨ ਫਿਰਤ ਜੇ ਪਾਈਐ ਜੋਗੁ ॥  
ਬਨ ਕਾ ਮਿਰਗੁ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਸਭੁ ਹੋਗੁ ॥੧॥

"If union could be achieved by roaming about naked, all the animals in the forest would have achieved liberation."

Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib also says in a very sweet hymn:

ਕਾਹੇ ਰੇ ਬਨ ਖੋਜਨ ਜਾਈ ॥  
ਸਰਬ ਨਿਵਾਸੀ ਸਦਾ ਅਲੋਪ  
ਤੇਹੀ ਮੰਗ ਸਮਾਈ ॥੧॥

"Why do you look for Him in forests. He is present everywhere, yet ever elusive. He is immanent within you."

Self is realized through recognition of the presence of one Supreme Spirit within and without, and through cleansing of impurities that clog the mind. So long as the mind remains unclean, self-realization or God-realization would ever remain a dream. The means for arresting the outgoing mind and cleaning its impurities is constant remembrance of the 'One Divine' through the repetition of any name for which one may have preference. Guru Nanak Dev says:

ਬਿਨ ਨਾਵੈ ਜੋਗ ਨਾ ਹੋਵਈ ॥

"Without the name of God no yog is possible."

In this endeavour, the help of a perfect master or Satguru is necessary to dispel doubts.

Another view point which was commonly accepted for a long time, was that the body itself was impure and must be subjected to extreme discipline and suffering to kill desires, e.g., by exposing it to harsh weather conditions, hunger and all sorts of discomforts. In pursuit of the ultimate truth, Mahavira, the Jain Master, had renounced worldly ties and observed silence for months. Lord Buddha had also renounced the world and practised mortification of flesh till he achieved enlightenment. Sheikh Farid had punished his body and had undergone extreme pain and suffering to achieve God-realization.

But Guru Nanak Dev ji rejected this long accepted

belief. He expressed his views on the subject in the following lines:

ਤਨ ਨ ਤਪਾਇ ਤੁਨੂਰ ਜਿਓ ਬਾਲ੍ਹੁ ਹਡ ਨ ਬਾਲਿ ॥  
ਸਿਰਿ ਪੈਰੀ ਕਿਆ ਫੇਝਿਆ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਪਿਰੀ ਸਮਾਲਿ ॥੪॥

(ਸਲੋਕ ਵਾਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਵਧੀਕ)

"Burn not thy body like a furnace nor feed the fire within thee with thy bones. There is nothing wrong with your head and feet, look for the Lord within you."

Guru Nanak Dev ji did not accept the idea that body should be subjected to torture. Instead, he said that it should be considered as a temple where God resides, and was the only vehicle available to human beings to reach Him :

ਮਨੁ ਮੰਦਰੁ ਤਨੁ ਵੇਸ ਕਲੰਦਰੁ ਘਟਹੀ ਤੀਗਥਿ ਨਾਵਾ ॥

"Mind itself is the temple, body is a beggar's garment. Heart is the place of pilgrimage where I bathe."

Thus the body is supposed to be a priceless gift from God, which even the angels long for. Guru Sahib advised the people to keep their mind and body clean in thought and in deed as it is sacred, being the abode of God. Impure thoughts and unclean deeds are a sacrilege to the temple. No doubt the body is short- lived, yet it is the only instrument the soul has for its onward march.

ਸਚੀ ਕਾਇਆ ਹਰਿ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਇਆ ॥

"That body is pure which sings the praises of the Lord."

But at the same time, his views were clear that the body should not be pampered or overindulged. Such a body he said, was useless:

ਨਾਨਕ ਇਹੁ ਤਨੁ ਜਾਲਿ ਜਿਨਿ ਜਾਲਿਐ ਨਾਮੁ ਵਿਸਾਰਿਆ ॥

(ਸਲੋਕ ਮਹਲਾ ੧)

"Nanak says cursed be the body which has forsaken the name of the Lord."

According to Gurbani, world is a beautiful place created by God; and human birth a splendid chance given by Him to human beings, to improve and ultimately realize Him. But it is only possible if one remained pure and truthful.

The emphasis is not so much on external renunciation as on internal detachment from desires, and that is the vital difference. 'Bairaag' or detachment is desirable, 'Tyaag' or renunciation is not essential. One can progress spiritually without renunciation, but such progress is impossible without detachment. Guru Nanak Dev ji explained:

ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਭੇਟਿਐ ਪੂਰੀ ਹੋਵੈ ਸੁਗਤਿ ॥  
ਹਸੰਦਿਆ ਖੇਲੰਦਿਆ ਪੈਨੰਦਿਆ ਖੰਵਦਿਆ ਵਿਚੇ ਹੋਵੈ ਮੁਕਤਿ ॥੨॥

"Effort to unite reaches its culmination on meeting the True Master. (Then) Even while laughing, playing, dressing or eating, you achieve liberation."

### How Much Do You Remember?

I. Answer the following questions:

1. What was the belief prevalent amongst yogis and seers for centuries?
2. What was Guru Nanak Dev ji's approach to spiritual advancement?
3. 'So long as the mind remains unclean self-realization will remain a dream.' Explain the statement in your own words.
4. What was the other view-point commonly accepted for a long time?
5. Guru Nanak Dev ji did not accept the idea that the body should be subjected to torture. Why?
6. Why is human birth a splendid chance given to us by God?

**II. Fill in the blanks:**

1. Self is realized through the recognition of the presence of one \_\_\_\_\_
2. Mahavira, the Jain Master, had observed \_\_\_\_\_ for months.
3. Sheik Farid had undergone extreme \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_
4. Guru Nanak Dev ji preached that the body should be considered as a \_\_\_\_\_
5. Our body is a priceless \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_
6. According to Gurbani world is a \_\_\_\_\_ place created by \_\_\_\_\_

## **7. GURBANI ON FAMILY LIFE — II**

In the context of the views on 'Renunciation', it is appropriate to review the attitude to family life for a spiritual seeker. For centuries the belief was held that a spiritual seeker should not lead a house-holder's life. He was expected to forsake the love of woman in order to love God more. This belief was not only current in India, but also amongst the Roman Catholics in the Western world. Actually this had led, to a considerable extent, to the denigration of woman. She was portrayed as a temptress or part of 'maya'.

From the very birth, the girl child suffered from the prejudice that she was unwelcome and unwanted. Later in life she was subjected to all sorts of injustices from the male dominated society. Man could marry as many times as he wanted, but even there-marriage of a young widow was not only looked down upon but considered highly objectionable. In our country the horrible practice of 'Sati' was the direct result of the belief of her inferiority and helplessness.

The Sikh Gurus rejected the idea of regarding woman as inferior to man. Woman was not only declared as equal in status to man but, was given an honourable place. 'Purdah' and Sati system were rejected by them. Women were even trained in martial arts for self-defence. Unlike the earlier customs, she was allowed to participate in all the religious functions. Marriage was sanctified and a house-holder's life acquired a healthy significance.

In the Sikh philosophy propounded by the Sikh Gurus, getting married and raising a family was part of the process of creation. The natural urges at the maturity of a

human body, were neither to be denied completely nor indulged in without restraint.

The Sikh marriage ceremony called 'Anand Karaj' (ceremony of bliss) was sanctified as a sacrament. In its mystic aspect, marriage is a stepping stone to the merging of the human soul with the Supreme Soul. The four rounds around Guru Granth Sahib, required for marriage, are the four stages of life through which an evolving seeker must pass.

However, any sort of extra - marital relations are regarded as sinful and strictly forbidden. Guru Nanak Dev ji wanted the people to practise vigorous discipline while living in the midst of family and society (with all the temptations of the social order) like this:

ਜੈਸੇ ਜਲ ਮਹਿ ਕਮਲੁ ਨਿਰਾਲਮੁ ਮੁਰਗਾਈ ਨੇ ਸਾਣੇ ॥  
ਸੁਰਤਿ ਸਬਦਿ ਭਵ ਸਾਗਰੁ ਤਰੀਐ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮੁ ਵਖਾਣੇ ॥

"As the lotus lives detached in water or the duck swims untouched in the stream, so one crosses the sea of life, attuning oneself to the Name," says Nanak.

Of the four stages of life, that of the house-holder is regarded as the highest. Family life itself teaches us certain lessons. Parents and children learn to share, to love selflessly and to sacrifice for each other. The head of the family learns self denial because of his wife's or children's demands.

Renunciation of selfishness is the real renunciation. Indeed victory over the five enemies — desire (kam), anger (krodh), greed (lobh), attachments (moh), ego (ahamkaar) — has to be achieved and tested in real life conditions of a householder. Therefore, one should remain in the family and in society, yet remain detached in spirit and work for the betterment of the society.

## **How Much Do You Remember?**

### **I. Answer the following questions:**

1. For centuries the belief was held that a spiritual seeker should not lead a house-holder's life. Why?
2. What was the condition of women in our country in olden times?
3. Why did the Sikh Gurus reject the idea of considering woman as inferior to man?
4. Why did the Sikh Gurus sanctify the institution of marriage?
5. What are the lessons that a human being learns by living a family life?

### **II. Something to do**

The teacher should discuss with the students the responsibilities which marriage brings with itself.

## 8. GURBANI ON MATERIALISM

We have to be clear about certain concepts of the Sikh Gurus on materialism. As has been observed before, the Sikh Gurus laid a lot of stress on honesty, discipline and virtuous living. They did not believe in creating a race of idlers who did not feel any responsibility towards the society. The Gurus preached, by their own example, that everyone must work for their livelihood. Every Sikh had a duty, not only towards his own family but also to the society to which he belonged, from which the individual gained and, therefore to which he must contribute also. This concept of 'kirit kamai', that is earning one's livelihood through the sweat of one's brow, was their watchword. Then, to share one's earnings with the less fortunate, which was called 'wand key chakhana', was a corollary to this concept. Every true Sikh was supposed to keep apart one tenth of his honest earnings (daswand) for charitable purposes. This practice invited the blessings of the 'Almighty' to the donor and the receiver both, for the whole humanity belonged to Him.

Thus the legitimate pursuit to earn one's living to satisfy one's economic needs through honest hard work, was considered perfectly natural, because it led to economic freedom which was necessary for self-respect as well as allowed the person to pursue the goal of spiritual advancement through 'Naam Simran' (singing the praises of the Lord or remembering Him). The Sikh Gurus were against the amassing of wealth. They believed that it could not be collected without using unfair or foul means. Guru Nanak Dev ji says:

ਪਾਪ ਬਾਝੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਨਹੀ ਮੁਇਆਂ ਸਾਬ ਨ ਜਾਈ ॥

"Wealth is not possible without sinful means and does not keep company after death."

The Sikh Gurus felt that wealth had a corrupting influence on the person who possessed it. It made him insensitive to the pain and suffering of other human beings.

Guru Amardas ji observed:

ਮਾਇਆਪਾਰੀ ਅਤਿ ਅੰਨਾ ਬੋਲਾ ॥

"A rich man is both deaf and blind."

Such a strong and contemptuous statement by the third Guru shows his utter dislike for the rich man, because he felt that excess of wealth brought out the immoral and brutish qualities of a man, and dehumanized him to such an extent that he could neither see what is right, nor was he capable of comprehending or listening to the correct advice of others.

Guru Nanak Dev ji refused the invitation of Malik Bhago and stayed with Bhai Lalo, a low caste carpenter. When Malik Bhago insisted on knowing the reason for his refusal to join his feast, Guru Nanak Dev ji showed, by taking in one hand the rich food offered by him, and holding in the other hand the piece of coarse bread of Bhai Lalo, and squeezing the two in his hands, that blood came out of the rich bread of Malik Bhago, and milk flowed out of the coarse bread of Bhai Lalo. He thus proved to the onlookers the difference between the livelihood earned by honest hard work and wealth earned through extortion.

Guru Nanak Dev ji stressed the point that it is the good deeds and not the wealth which goes with a person after death. Gurbani says:

ਮਾਇਆ ਮੇਹੁ ਸਭੁ ਦੁਖ ਹੈ ਖੋਟਾ ਇਹੁ ਵਾਪਰਾ ਰਾਮ ॥

"Passion for wealth is the source of suffering. It is a deceptive business."

Guru Nanak Dev ji visited a rich man of Lahore named Dunichand. Seven flags, which flew atop his house, announced

the measure of his wealth, each flag denoting Rs. one lakh. He held a big lunch for one and all, which was attended by Guru Nanak Dev ji. At the end of it, he asked Guru Sahib if he could do any more service to him. Guru Nanak Dev ji's request was mystifying, "Could you carry this needle with you for me and give it to me in the next life?" Dunichand felt bewildered, but his wife came to his rescue. She said, "If you cannot take even a needle with you, what is the point in amassing so much wealth?" From then on, Dunichand started spending his wealth for the welfare of others.

Pursuit of wealth as an end in itself, and not as a means to an end, can turn into a craving (trishna), which is like fire. Fire can never quench its thirst for firewood:

ਤ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨਾ ਵਿਰਲੇ ਹੀ ਕੀ ਬੁਝੀ ਹੋ ॥

"Unsatisfied desires have seldom been satisfied."

Money cannot buy happiness or contentment or good health. These things come only when God's grace is earned through an attitude of prayer, service and sacrifice. If money alone was the criteria of happiness, the rich alone would be happy. In real life, it is not so. Apparently they seem well-off, but in reality their lives are full of anxiety, tensions and bickerings which rob them of their peace of mind.

ਬਾਬਾ ਮਾਇਆ ਸਾਥਿ ਨ ਹੋਇ ॥  
ਇਨ੍ਹਿ ਮਾਇਆ ਜਗੁ ਮੌਹਿਆ ਵਿਰਲਾ ਬੂੜੈ ਕੋਇ ॥

"Only a very few in this world understand the fact that the wealth does not accompany anyone after death, for which we sacrifice so much in life."

If one is lucky to acquire great wealth by the grace of God, he must act as its trustee, and spend it freely on the poor and the needy. Wealth thus spent gets sanctified, and does not impede the spiritual progress of the person.

Guru Nanak Dev ji says:

ਤਿਸ ਕੀ ਕਰਿ ਪੇਤਦਾਰੀ ਫਿਰੁ ਦੁਖੁ ਨ ਲਾਗੈ ॥੯॥

"Be thou His trustee and then there is no pain."

If wealth is treated as a means of doing service, it is blessed. But the rich man must remain humble and thank the Lord for allowing him to serve.

Kabir ji's advice to a man who had too much of wealth was like this:

ਪਣੀ ਬਾਢੋ ਨਾਵ, ਮੇ ਘਰ ਮੇ ਬਾਢੋ ਦਾਮ ॥  
ਦੋਨੋ ਹਾਥ ਉਲੀਚੀਏ, ਯਹੀ ਸਜਾਨੋ ਕਾਮ ॥

"If water floods the boat or money is flooded in a home, one should throw it out with both hands. That is what a wise man should do."

### How Much Do You Remember?

I. Answer the following questions:

1. What do you understand by 'kirit kamai'?
2. Why were the Sikh Gurus against amassing wealth?
3. Why did Guru Amardas ji call a rich man blind and deaf?
4. Why did Guru Nanak Dev ji refuse the invitation of Malik Bhago?
5. Write about Guru Nanak Dev ji's visit to the house of Dunichand, the rich man of Lahore.
6. Can money buy happiness, contentment and health?
7. What should one do if one is lucky to acquire great wealth?

II. Something to do

It will be interesting to have a class discussion on the topic, 'Deterioration of moral values in today's materialistic world.'

## **9. GURBANI ON THE FIVE MALADIES**

The five maladies, mentioned by Gurbani, which do not allow human beings to achieve perfection, and are the main hurdles on the way to spiritual progress are — Kaam (desires), Krodh (anger), Lobh (greed), Moh (attachment) and Ahamkaar (ego). These weaknesses in man are usually the cause of his misery, unhappiness and lack of peace of mind. They make him petty, jealous, cruel and wicked. Unless a person first realizes and then tries his utmost to overcome them, there is no way by which he can progress towards self-realization. These weaknesses lead to self-delusion and self-ego and become the stumbling blocks on the way to spiritual progress.

Gurbani says:

ਕਾਮ ਕੋਪੁ ਲੇਭੁ ਮੋਹੁ ਨਿਤ ਝਗਰਤੇ ਝਗਰਾਇਆ ॥

"Desire, anger, greed and attachment are the causes of all the quarrels of man."

### **Kaam (Desire)**

The word 'kaam' stands for all desires, although people usually interpret it in the sense of sexual desire for the opposite sex. There is nothing wrong with desires as such, for like all other creatures, human beings also have some basic needs. God has given man five sense organs, which are relatively more developed than those of other creatures. Each of these senses looks for its own delight in the outer world. For example, ears are naturally attracted towards sound, while eyes get naturally attracted towards forms. So is the tongue which hankers after taste, nose which goes for smells and skin which feels the sense of touch.

These organic and sensory faculties have been put by God in man, and act as his windows to the outer world.

Human desires are infinite, and we refuse to understand that every desire bears its own death in its very gratification. Passions and desires are like the two twists of a rope, entwined together around our heart, which keep demanding and we keep toiling all our lives to fulfill them. It becomes an endless process. But Gurbani teaches us that to run after desires is like pursuing a mirage. A wise man will desire no more than what he gets justly, and thank the Lord for it. In moderating, not in satisfying desires, lies peace. The trouble arises when man loses sense of proportion and turns desires into cravings. Desires have a tendency to multiply through satisfaction. If one continues to fulfill them, one becomes greedy. If one gets frustrated in their fulfillment, he gets angry. Thus repeated satisfaction tempts man to become greedy, while non-fulfillment and frustration produces anger in him.

Greed, in turn, leads to attachment. Man becomes possessive about the objects of his desires, and does not want to part with or share with others, even if they are far beyond his own needs. From the sense of possessiveness arises the feeling of 'I' and 'mine'. This is precisely what 'ahamkaar' stands for. It means egotism. Man starts imagining that he is the doer. Meaning of 'ahamkaar' (ego or pride) is, "I am the doer". As a result of this individuality, or the ego-sense in man, he starts acting selfishly. This produces feelings of jealousy, hatred, pride and vanity. Thus these maladies become the sources of trouble for himself and for others in the society. All tensions, anxieties, quarrels and clashes are the product of selfishness, born out of the sense of ego. In fact ego becomes the leader of all the other maladies, all of which obey its commands. Man becomes harsh, discontented and unhappy. Gurbani lays a lot of emphasis on the need to recognize these maladies and overcome them.

## **Krodh (Anger)**

Anger (krodh) is regarded as a 'fire' which burns the one who is angry, and hurts the one to whom the anger is directed. The wise men advise that one should not act in anger, for one is likely to lose balance and say or do something which may not be justified. If this is not done, one may have to repent for one's deeds.

## **Lobh (Greed)**

Greed (lobh) is even worse. Kabir ji says, "A lusty or an angry man may have a chance of redemption, but there is no salvation for a greedy person as a matter of principle."

ਕਮੀ ਤੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਤਰੇ ਕਰੋਪੀ ਤਰੇ ਅਨੰਤ ॥  
ਲੋਭੀ ਜੀਅਗਾ ਨ ਤਰੇ ਕੇ ਕਬੀਰ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ॥

Guru Nanak Dev ji therefore advises:

ਲਾਲਚ ਛੋਡਹੁ ਅੰਪਿਹੋ ਲਾਲਚਿ ਦੁਖੁ ਭਾਰੀ ॥

"Give up greed, you who are blinded by it, for greed is the source of great trouble." At another place Gurbani says:

ਲੋਭੀ ਕਾ ਵੇਸਾਹੁ ਨ ਕੀਜੈ ਜੇਕਾ ਪਾਰਿ ਵਸਾਇ ॥  
ਅੰਤਿ ਕਾਲਿ ਤਿਥੈ ਪੂਰੈ ਜਿਥੈ ਹਥੁ ਨ ਪਾਇ ॥

"Never trust a greedy person as far as possible, for he may deceive you at a point when you become helpless."

## **Moh (Attachment)**

All pains arise out of a sense of attachment. Gurbani regards 'moh' as a kind of quagmire in which one gets stuck.

ਪੰਕਜੁ ਮੋਹੁ ਪਗ ਨਹੀ ਚਾਲੈ  
ਹਮ ਦੇਖਾ ਤਹ ਢੁਬੀਆਲੇ ॥੧॥

Man undergoes a lot of trouble to accumulate possessions, and becomes unhappy when he loses them. Without the True Name, says Nanak, no appetite can be satisfied. All the delights of the

body only lead to suffering. Who is responsible for such self-invited suffering? Kabir ji gives the answer by giving the example of a parrot:

ਨਲਨੀ ਕੇ ਸੁਗਨਾ ਤੋਹੈ ਕੋਨੇ ਹੈ ਪਕੜੇ ॥

The device by which parrots are caught is called 'Nalini' in Uttar Pradesh. A strip of wood is attached to a rope between two trees. On the flat end of the wood are kept some bits of fruit. The parrot sees them and perches itself on it. Its balance is lost and it holds the rope in its own claws, upside down. Kabir ji says, "Who is holding you, O parrot?" It can still fly away if it loosens its grip, but doesn't do so, and gets caught. Man's condition is similar. Guru Nanak Dev ji says:

ਮੂਲੁ ਮੌਹੁ ਕਰਿ ਕਰਤੇ ਜਗਤੁ ਉਪਾਇਆ ॥  
ਮਮਤਾ ਲਾਇ ਭਰਮਿ ਭੁਲਾਇਆ ॥

"The creator made attachment as basic to His creation. Through possessiveness all gets deluded."

He again points to the transitory nature of human relationships, which last for only one life-time:

ਨ ਕਿਸ ਕਾ ਪ੍ਰਤੁ ਨ ਕਿਸ ਕੀ ਮਾਈ ॥  
ਝੂਠੈ ਮੌਹੁ ਭਰਮਿ ਭੁਲਾਈ ॥

"No one is a son and none is a mother. All are deluded due to false attachments."

### Ahamkaar (Ego)

'Ahamkaar' stands for egotism, vanity, sense of false pride etc. Indeed this is the most stubborn enemy that man has to deal with. Ego alone is responsible for transmigration of the soul. Conscious of his individuality and regarding himself as separate from the others, man does good or evil deeds. For the settlement of his accounts with others, for receiving rewards and punishments for good or bad deeds done, he has to come back

to this world again and again. Another reason for re-birth is, the lack of peace of mind, which is destroyed by these maladies. Gurbani has dealt with this problem of ego at considerable length. It is regarded as the most chronic disease, because all transactions of everyday life take place through it.

Gurbani says:

ਹਉਮੈ ਦੀਰਘ ਰੋਗੁ ਹੈ ਦਾਰੂ ਭੀ ਇਸ ਮਾਹਿ ॥  
ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰੇ ਜੇ ਅਪਣੀ ਤਾਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਕਾ ਸਬਦੁ ਕਮਾਹਿ ॥

"Ego is a chronic disease but the remedy also lies in it. When a seeker with the grace of God follows the Guru's instructions and acquires merit through 'Naam Simran', he gets rid of it."

### **How Much Do You Remember?**

I. Answer the following questions:

1. Name the five maladies which do not allow human beings to achieve perfection.
2. Name the five organs of sense, and what are they attracted to?
3. Write in your own words two paragraphs on human desires.
4. Why has anger been described as fire?
5. Why did Kabir ji describe greed as even worse than desire and anger?
6. How is ego responsible for transmigration of the soul?

II. Fill in the blanks:

1. These weaknesses lead to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_
2. In \_\_\_\_\_ desires, not in satisfying desires lies \_\_\_\_\_
3. Desires have a tendency to \_\_\_\_\_ through satisfaction.
4. Greed leads to \_\_\_\_\_
5. All \_\_\_\_\_ arise out of attachments.

## **10. GURBANI ON DIVINE QUALITIES**

As against the maladies (mentioned in the last chapter), which obstruct a man's progress towards spirituality, there are several virtues, which, if cultivated, help him on this path.

### **Compassion (Daya)**

The first, and the most important of all the virtues, is compassion (daya). It is the basis of 'dharma', or sense of righteousness. In Jap ji Guru Nanak Dev ji says:

ਪੋਲ ਧਰਮੁ ਦਇਆ ਕਾ ਪ੍ਰਤੁ ॥  
ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ਬਾਪਿ ਗਖਿਆ ਜਿਨਿ ਸੁਤਿ ॥

"The earth is held together by 'dharma' which itself is born out of compassion."

Compassion or 'daya' means kindness, sympathy, love and mercy for one and all. A compassionate person is very sensitive to the suffering of others and would do his best to alleviate them. Such a person is humble and speaks softly and sweetly with others. Guru Nanak Dev ji says:

ਮਿਠਤੁ ਨੀਵੀ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਗੁਣ ਚੰਗਿਆਈਆ ਤਤੁ ॥

"Essence of all virtues is sweetness and humility." A person with these qualities signifies compassion which is part of 'dharma' or righteousness.

Compassion is a divine quality, because God Himself is compassionate. He is the sustainer of all, and showers His Grace on the creatures of this earth. So a compassionate person is friendly, loving, soft-spoken and patient. He never thinks ill of others and is not jealous of anyone. He is above pettiness, pride and meanness. Tulsi Das ji says:

ਦਾ ਧਰਮ ਕਾ ਮੂਲ ਹੈ, ਪਾਪ ਮੂਲ ਅਭਿਮਾਨ ॥  
ਤੁਲਸੀ ਦਾ ਨ ਛੋਡੀਏ ਜਬ ਲਗ ਘਟ ਮੇਂ ਪ੍ਰਣ ॥

"Compassion is the root of 'dharma', and pride that of sins. Oh Tulsi, do not give up compassion till there is breath in the body."

Guru Arjan Dev ji has given a high place to a compassionate person:

ਅਠਸਠਿ ਤੀਰਥ ਸਗਲ ਪੁੰਨ ਜੀਅ ਦਇਆ ਪਰਵਾਨੁ ॥  
ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਦੇਵੈ ਦਇਆ ਕਰਿ ਸੋਈ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਸੁਜਾਨੁ ॥

"Compassion is better than pilgrimage to sixty-eight sacred spots or all charities. He who gets it by His Grace is the true knower."

Harsh words or criticism of others retards the spiritual progress of a person, and leaves him unfit for worship of the Lord. One must be very careful of one's speech, so that nothing is said which can hurt anyone. Bad words lead to friction, disputes, disharmony and suffering. Physical violence is forbidden to the person who wants to follow the path of spirituality. If one was to understand this thoroughly, the whole way of thinking, speaking and doing would change. Mind, speech and body are capable of doing tremendous good as well as bad, and the path of goodness must be followed. Thus we should follow the principle of not hurting anyone through thought, word or deed. This is only possible if we are compassionate, and love the Lord and His creatures.

### **Contentment (Santosh)**

Just as discontent arises from senseless pursuit of desires, contentment is achieved by getting rid of cravings for worldly possessions. Any person filled with compassion and sympathy feels contented, because he has been able to conquer selfishness or self-ego. Such a person is calm, because he is devoid of enmity, jealousy, anger and passion. He develops patience and spiritual strength. He feels happy in the happiness and progress

of others. He does not get perturbed if he doesn't get reward for his own toils, and leaves everything to the will of the Lord (Bhana). Such a person is blessed with peace.

A contented person does not run after money and wealth. He is satisfied by whatever he earns with honest hard work, because only such earnings can lead to happiness, peace, contentment and patience. Money otherwise earned leads to ever increasing greed, dissatisfaction and suffering. Usually the money earned by evil means is spent on evil deeds, because it acts like poison on the person using it. Life of such a person is wasted here and hereafter. The rich man is not actually rich but a beggar, because he keeps asking for more and more throughout his life. While a contented person is rich because he is satisfied and is desireless. He has achieved peace of mind, and with it disappear the wants and worries of life.

Kabir ji says about such a person:

ਚਾਹ ਗਈ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਮਿਟੀ ਮਨੂਆ ਬੇ ਪਰਵਾਹੁ ॥  
ਜਿਨ ਕੇ ਕਛੂ ਨ ਚਾਹੀਏ ਸੋਈ ਸ਼ਾਹਨਸ਼ਾਹ ॥

"When desire is gone, worry is ended. Mind is carefree. Those who require nothing are kings."

### **Forgiveness (Kshama)**

A person who is contented and compassionate is bound to be forgiving. Shakespeare has said, "To err is human, to forgive divine". No one is perfect except God, therefore, if someone commits a mistake and realizes his fault, he must be forgiven and thereafter one should forget about it. A person of forgiving nature is forbearing and humble.

There are two powers in the world, one is justice and the other is forgiveness born out of mercy. There is no doubt that justice is good, but what can be achieved through forgiveness cannot be achieved through justice. If for every mistake we start punishing a person, we will be spreading unhappiness around.

Punishment produces a sense of revenge in the other person, and it becomes stronger while undergoing punishment. His mind does not rest till he has avenged. This leads to further conflict, unhappiness and suffering. Therefore a person who forgives is much higher than the one who gives a just judgement. Forgiveness leaves a permanent impression on the mind of a person who committed the blunder, and greatly helps him to improve himself, while the punished person tends to further develop criminal tendencies, and nurtures hatred in his heart for the one who punished him. Thus by justice we do not achieve much; it only encourages negative qualities. Only a morally enriched and brave person is capable of forgiveness. The Lord above is kind and compassionate and merciful.

Kabir ji has described such a person beautifully:

ਭਲੀ ਭਲੀ ਸਭ ਕੇ ਕਹੇ ਭਲੀ ਖਿਮਾ ਕਾ ਰੂਪ ॥  
ਜਾ ਕੇ ਮਨ ਮੈ ਖਿਮਾ ਤੇ ਨਹੀ ਬੁਡੇ ਭੈ ਰੂਪ ॥

"All talk of goodness but goodness takes the form of forgiveness. He who has no forgiveness in his heart shall drown in the well of fear."

The only way to subdue anger is to forgive. There is no other way by which we can achieve this sort of outcome. A woman can understand and is capable of forgiveness more than a man, because she has the experience of forgiving her children everyday for their innumerable mistakes.

Kabir ji has again described the quality very well:

ਸੁਤੁ ਅਪਰਾਧ ਕਰਤ ਹੈ ਜੇਤੇ ॥  
ਜਨਨੀ ਚੀਤਿ ਨ ਰਾਖਸਿ ਤੇਤੇ ॥੧॥

"Whatever faults a child may commit, the mother does not keep them in her memory."

### **Humility (Namrata)**

Man is full of egotism and pride, and that is what separates him

from God. Some are proud of their wealth and family background. But no one chooses his or her parents, nor the time and place of their birth. All that is ordained. Others may be proud of their youth or beauty, which also is given to them by the Lord, and is transitory anyway. There are some who are proud of their learning and knowledge, without realizing that it was God who had given them the capacity and the opportunity to learn by blessing them with a fine brain. Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib says:

ਝੂਠੇ ਮਾਨੁ ਕਹਾ ਕਰੈ ਜਗੁ ਸੁਪਨੇ ਜਿਉ ਜਾਨੁ ॥  
ਇਨ ਮੈ ਕਛੁ ਤੇਰੋ ਨਹੀ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਹਿਓ ਬਖਾਨੁ ॥੮॥

"Why are you falsely proud of this world, which is like a dream? Nothing is yours in it, says Nanak."

Therefore, when we begin to understand that there is no point being proud and vain for anything that we possess, as all has been given by Him, we are on the path to humility. We begin to thank Him for His blessings, and the innumerable bounties given to us. Then we begin to realize that we are nothing and of no consequence in the cosmic scheme of things. Those who really begin to believe that they are the lowest, begin to progress spiritually. Kabir ji says:

ਕਬੀਰ ਸਭ ਤੇ ਹਮ ਬੁਰੇ ਹਮ ਤਜਿ ਭਲੇ ਸਭੁ ਕੋਇ ॥  
ਜਿਨਿ ਐਸਾ ਕਰਿ ਬੁਝਿਆ ਮੀਤੁ ਹਮਾਰਾ ਸੋਇ ॥੧॥

"Oh Kabir, I am the worst, everybody else is good; he who thinks so is my friend."

Sometimes we deceive ourselves by remaining in the background and avoiding the limelight, but inwardly feeling that somebody should call us to the front and praise us. Such thoughts do not arise if one is truly humble. A humble person does his duty to the best of his ability and surrenders it to the Lord. His heart is filled with love and he doesn't react even if someone tries to harm him.

Egotism and pride do not please the Lord. He showers His blessings on those who are truly humble and meek. But humility should not be taken as a weakness, because a humble and a truthful person is very strong inwardly. He possesses tremendous inner strength.

If one wants to find the Lord, one has to be extremely humble and surrender himself to His will. When we give up pride and bow before Him, our souls become pure and we are rid of the passions of anger, pride, greed and attachment. Guru Arjan Dev ji says:

ਆਪਸ ਕਉ ਜੇ ਜਾਣੈ ਨੀਚਾ ॥  
ਸੋਉ ਗਨੀਐ ਸਭ ਤੇ ਉਚਾ ॥

"He who regards himself to be the lowest, consider him to be the highest."

### **Truthfulness (Satya vachan)**

Truthfulness means the values which are eternal. In Guru Granth Sahib this quality has been attributed to God. The truth is that He existed before the beginning of the universe and will exist forever.

ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਚੇ ਕਉ ਸਭ ਜਾਣੁ ॥

"Oh Nanak know the True One to be True."

Guru Amardas ji points out:

ਇਹੁ ਸਭ ਸਭਨਾ ਕਾ ਖਸਮੁ ਹੈ ਜਿਸੁ ਬਖਸੇ ਸੇ ਜਨੁ ਪਾਵਹੇ ॥

"The Truth is the Lord of all. One only realizes it by His Grace."

The goal of human life is to accept Truth and then make it as the basis of one's life. Truthful living has been given a higher place than truth itself. Besides speaking the truth, one must conduct one's life and dealings with others based on truth. A truthful person is never afraid of anybody because he feels extremely confident, as there is no feeling of guilt in him. Such

a person remains peaceful and happy. Truthful conduct should be our ideal in life. A truthful person is protected by the Lord and no evil can ever touch him. Kabir ji says:

ਸਾਚੇ ਸ੍ਰੂਪ ਨ ਲਾਗਈ ਸਾਚੇ ਕਾਲ ਨ ਖਾਇ ॥  
ਸਾਚੇ ਕੋ ਸਾਚਾ ਮਿਲੇ ਸਾਚੇ ਮਾਹਿ ਸਮਾਇ ॥

"The truthful person is not affected by curses or touched by 'kal' (time). When he meets the Truth (Lord), he merges in it."

No amount of charity, austerity, devotion or remembrance of Lord can help an untruthful person. There are people who commit all sorts of sins, and then go to places of pilgrimage or take to fasting, and feel that they have atoned for their sins. This is nothing but self-deception. They do not realize that they cannot please the Lord with their cleverness. While a truthful person is brave, steady and peaceful, an untruthful person is a coward and is afraid. A truthful person can gaze into the eyes of anyone, while a liar looks with downcast eyes. He or she is always afraid that the falsehood would be detected. Their mind keeps scheming and planning all the time and is never at peace with itself. Therefore Guru Arjan Dev ji says:

ਸਚੁ ਵਾਪਣੁ ਕਰਹੁ ਵਾਪਣੀ ॥  
ਦਰਗਹ ਨਿਬਹੈ ਖੇਪ ਤੁਮਾਰੀ ॥

"You should engage in the trade of truth, so that your merchandise is accepted in His court.

### Cleanliness (Souch)

Cleanliness is considered as an essential part of religious discipline. Cleanliness is of two kinds - external and internal. Purity of mind and of senses belong to the internal cleanliness, while that of clothing, body or house relate to external kind of cleanliness. Cleanliness is said to be next to godliness. Both types of cleanliness are needed for spiritual progress. Internal cleanliness is achieved through 'Simran' (remembering the

Lord), by entertaining pure thoughts and by honesty and truthful conduct. By external cleanliness is meant that a person should have a clean environment, should bathe everyday, and wear clean clothes. He must eat simple, clean food regularly and keep fasts to give the system the necessary rest.

The above mentioned qualities are called the Divine qualities and must be cultivated by any person who desires to achieve self-realization or God-realization.

## **How Much Do You Remember?**

### I. Answer the following questions:

1. What are the characteristics of a compassionate person?
2. Write a paragraph describing a contented person.
3. "To err is human, to forgive divine". Explain in your own words.
4. How is forgiveness better than justice?
5. Why is a woman capable of forgiveness more than a man?
6. Why should one not be proud of family background, beauty and knowledge?
7. Define truthfulness in your own words.
8. What is internal and external cleanliness?

### II. Something to do

Have a debate on any of the following topics:

1. Is justice better than forgiveness?
2. Does truth lead to happiness?
3. Pride leads to success or humility?

## **11. GURBANI ON SERVICE (SEWA)**

Guru Nanak Dev ji felt deeply that religion and humanism were one and the same thing. He could not conceive the idea that a man of God could be indifferent to the suffering around, because love of God must lead to love and service of His creatures on earth. Individual piety, though necessary in itself, was not Guru Sahib's sole aim. He was not interested in producing a few good men. What he really wanted was to humanize each person, so that in turn they humanize the whole society. He emphasized the fact that love was the main pathway to God:

ਸਾਚ ਕਹੋ ਸੁਨ ਲੇਹੁ ਸਭੈ  
ਜਿਨ ਪ੍ਰਮ ਕੀਉ ਤਿਨ ਹੀ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਪਾਇਉ ।੨੯।

"Truthfully do I state to everyone  
That God is realized only by those who love"

God being spirit and formless can be loved through devotion to the Masters (Gurus) and the saintly beings. Since God is all pervasive, such love must express itself through service of humanity at large. According to Sikh Gurus, service (sewa) is the best form of worship and is the essence of a religious mind. Guru Nanak Dev ji says:

ਬਿਨੁ ਸੇਵਾ ਫਲ ਕਬਹੁ ਨ ਪਾਵਸਿ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰਨੀ ਸਾਰੀ ।੨।  
"Nothing is fruitful without service, for that is the essence of the matter." He goes on to add:

ਵਿਚ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਸੇਵ ਕਮਾਈਐ ॥  
ਤਾਂ ਦਰਗਾਨ ਬੈਸਣ ਪਾਈਐ ॥

"While in the world, earn merit through service. That is the way to find a seat in the court of the Lord."

Guru Amardas ji also exhorts:

ਜਿਚਰੁ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਸਾਸੁ ਤਿਚਰੁ ਸੇਵਾ ਕੀਚੇ  
ਜਾਇ ਮਿਲੀਐ ਰਾਮ ਮੁਰਾਰੀ ॥੨੫॥

"So long as you breathe, keep doing service to others. This is how you will attain God."

The Gurus exemplified their teachings through their own conduct in life by serving their own Guru, and the humanity at large, in a spirit of humility, self-sacrifice and devotion. Guru Nanak Dev ji settled down at Kartarpur, took to farming and shared his earnings with all the needy who came to his door. In fact the tradition of 'Guru ka langar' (free kitchen) for one and all, started with him. Bhai Lehna ji, who was later exalted as Guru Angad Dev ji was always at his beck and call, and showed his sense of dedication and obedience by rebuilding again and again the wall of Guru Nanak Devji's house (which had collapsed) in the middle of the night.

Guru Amardas ji used to walk a distance of three miles to fetch a pitcher of water from the river, for the bath of Guru Angad Dev ji. Come hail or storm, he never deviated from duty. Bhai Jetha who later became Guru Ram Das ji was always in attendance to Guru Amardas ji, and it was his dedication and devotion that won him the Gur-Gaddi. Guru Gobind Singh ji would receive the pilgrims who came to him on festival days several miles ahead, and personally looked after their comforts, usually disguised as a 'sewadar' (volunteer). The story of Bhai Kanahiya is well known. He served the wounded soldiers, Sikh and Turks, without any distinction. When questioned why he did so, he replied, "I see only my Guru's image in all of them."

To serve the elders and wiser people by humbly obeying their commands, looking after their personal needs and not hesitating from even doing menial jobs like sweeping and cleaning, all come under the heading of service (sewa). Maharaja Ranjit Singh carried a bag of grains on his back for an old woman, who found it too difficult to handle it. The tradition of sewa

(service) is kept up in Gurdwaras all over the world. Service has to be done selflessly (nishkaam). Gurbani says:

ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰਤ ਹੋਏ ਨਿਹਕਾਮੀ ॥  
ਤਿਸ ਕਉ ਹੋਤ ਪਰਾਪਤਿ ਸੁਆਮੀ ॥

"Whoever serves selflessly (without any expectation of reward) attains the Divine."

Any service with a sense of ego, vanity or pride is no service at all. Guru Arjan Dev ji says:

ਮਾਨ ਅਭਿਮਾਨ ਮੰਧੇ ਸੇ ਸੇਵਕੁ ਨਾਹੀ ॥

"Whoever acts arrogantly while serving is not serving at all."

In Gurbani, service (sewa) of four kinds is mentioned:

1. Service through wealth. (ਧਨ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ)
2. Service through body. (ਤਨ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ)
3. Service through the mind (ਮਨ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ)
4. Service through awareness. (ਸੁਗਤਿ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ)

Each succeeding type is considered higher in merit than the preceding one. The first two are easy to understand. The service through the mind is when you show compassion, understanding, sympathy, and provide solace with sweet and kind words to anyone who is passing through emotional, physical or mental stress. The last one is regarded as the highest, because it starts by recognizing and accepting every one as the image of God. Only a spiritually evolved person is capable of performing such service. Through his service he raises the spiritual level of whomever he serves, thereby showing him the way to escape from all kinds of suffering, physical, emotional and mental.

Guru Nanak Dev ji says:

ਜੇਤੇ ਜੀਅ ਤੇਤੇ ਸਭਿ ਤੇਰੇ ਵਿਣੁ ਸੇਵਾ ਫਲੁ ਕਿਸੇ ਨਾਹੀ ॥

"All the Jivas (embodied souls) are yours only, and without service none gets rewards."

Guru Arjan Dev ji calls such a one a rare breed:

ਜਾ ਕੈ ਮਸਤਿਕ ਭਾਗ ਸਿ ਸੇਵਾ ਲਾਇਆ ॥  
ਸੇਵਾ ਲਾਗੇ ਸੇ ਵਡਭਾਗੇ ॥

"Only lucky ones get the chance to serve."

The essentials of proper service (sewa) are:

1. Purity of motivation,
2. Enthusiasm (utsah),
3. Positive and constructive imagination,
4. Absence of desire for reward and
5. Humility.

Service done in such a spirit to an individual, a group or community, becomes the service of the Divine, and gets blessed.

### **How Much Do You Remember?**

I. Answer the following questions:

1. Individual piety was not the sole aim of Guru Nanak Dev ji. What did he really want to do?
2. How do we serve God?
3. How did the Gurus exemplify their own teachings?
4. Why did Maharaja Ranjit Singh carry a bag of grains?
5. How many kinds of service are mentioned in Gurbani?
6. What are the essentials of proper service?

II. Something to do

Collect information about some great people who spent their lives in the service of humanity.

## **12. GURBANI ON NAAM SIMRAN (NAME)**

'Naam' stands for identity of a person or a thing, and 'simran' means remembrance. We live in a world of 'naam' and 'roop', name and form. Anything that has a form, we try to give a name to it for identity. But Absolute Reality, or God has no form, yet we try to give Him a name. This is because He exists, even if not visible. He is the spirit behind the entire creation, and can be experienced only in the human heart. He resides at the centre or the heart of everything.

It is a fact of daily life that we absorb, consciously or unconsciously, the qualities of someone we admire or remember. When we think of the Divine, or of any God intoxicated person; like an Avtar, Satguru or a Prophet, with affection and devotion, we start absorbing in ourselves his divine qualities. Guru Amardas ji says:

**ਗੁਣ ਕਹਿ ਗੁਣੀ ਸਮਾਵਣਿਆ ॥**

"By praising His virtues, one gets merged in the virtuous."

In spiritual effort 'naam simran' has been regarded as one of the most powerful techniques for developing an inward look and acquiring spiritual merit. In following this simple technique, one not only succeeds in concentrating the outgoing mind, but can also get rid of all fear and anxiety, thereby achieving peace and stability. Guru Amardas ji says:

**ਮਨ ਤੂੰ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਰ੍ਵਪੁ ਹੈ ਆਪਨਾ ਮੂਲੁ ਪਛਾਣੁ॥੮੮॥**

"O mind and soul, thou have emanated from the light of God. Recognize thy true essence."

It is said that how-so-ever sinful tendencies a man may have, he will succeed in getting rid of them with the grace of the Lord and 'naam simran'.

In the previous chapters we dealt with the five maladies which a true seeker must get rid of, and the divine qualities which he has to acquire, for becoming fit for self-realization. This two-fold approach is similar to what a farmer does, in preparing his field for raising a good crop. He removes all that is unwanted, like weeds, stones etc., and puts in what is desirable, like ploughing, furrow making, using manure etc. He sows seeds only after such preparation. In the same manner, getting rid of negative qualities of one's character and cultivating positive ones, prepares a seeker of truth, for the final experience of self realization. The technique of 'naam simran' is, however, superior, because by resorting to it one automatically becomes conscious of one's faults and weaknesses which he wants to get rid of, and at the same time starts building virtuous qualities in himself. Thus it is not a pre-condition for self-realization to first get rid of the evil tendencies and cultivate virtuous qualities, before starting the practice of 'naam simran'. Both these purposes are fulfilled as soon as you start on the path and make progress.

The technique is like this: select any one of the several names of God which inspires in you a feeling of faith, reverence, devotion and of surrender. No one name is superior to the other.

Guru Nanak Dev ji says:

ਬਲਿਹਾਰੀ ਜਾਇ ਜੇਤੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਨਾਵ ਹੈ ॥੧੨॥

"I am sacrifice unto all the names that you bear."

Having chosen a Name, begin by reciting it loudly in such a way that you hear the recital. After sometime bring down the pitch to a lower level. Keep hearing it. Then continue the repetition of the Name in whispers, making sure that you hear in the mind only. Close your eyes and hear this inward repetition of the Name. Equal time should be devoted to all the four stages.

When you practice the repetition of the Name in this manner in the beginning, you would be surprised to discover that the restlessness of the mind is reduced. It will start withdrawing its attention from the outer world of objects and concentrate it within self. When the recital is done with full awareness, the level of consciousness starts increasing. The voice of conscience, which is the voice of God in man, starts becoming louder. The seeker becomes more and more conscious of his own faults, which he wants to get rid of now. The place vacated by this elimination is taken up by Divine qualities, which start pouring in their place. In course of time this practice develops as 'Ajapa', that is, automatic and spontaneous recital of the Name within. When 'Ajapa' stage is reached, the seeker will find as if someone else is doing the job of the repetition of the Name within him. His ego consciousness will then become much weaker and he will be fit for the inner vision of the Lord. Guru Nanak Dev ji says:

ਅਲਖ ਅਪਾਰ ਅਗੰਮ ਅਗੋਚਰ ਨਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਕਾਲੁ ਨ ਕਰਮਾ ॥

"The Lord is unfathomable, limitless and beyond conception. He is also beyond the reach of senses and therefore beyond desire and activity." Elsewhere he says:

ਤੂ ਦਰੀਆਏ ਦਾਨਾ ਬੀਨਾ ਮੈ ਮਹੁਲੀ ਕੈਸੇ ਅੰਤੁ ਲਹਾ ॥  
ਜਹ ਜਹ ਦੇਖਾ ਤਹ ਤਹ ਤੂ ਹੈ ਤੁਝ ਤੇ ਨਿਕਸੀ ਫੁੰਟ ਮਰਾ ॥੧॥

"Oh all knowing Lord, you are like a river while I am like a fish, how can I measure your limits? Wherever I look, I see nothing but thee, I shall perish if I ever come out to take your measure."

How can such a One be 'realized' when our organs of sense, our instruments of knowledge, fail to reach Him? It is achieved only by withdrawing the mind from the outer world, concentrating it with the help of the repetition of the Name which will quieten it. When the mind becomes totally silent, the self is perceived within. Kabir ji says:

ਸੋਏ ਥੈਂਦੇ ਖੜੇ ਉਤਾਨੇ, ਕਹੋ ਕਬੀਰ ਹਮਵੁਹੀ ਟਿਕਾਨੇ ॥

"Whether sitting or standing or lying down, the mind is always focussed on Him."

Guru Nanak Dev ji realised the problem and said:

ਨਾਮ ਸੰਗਿ ਜਿਮ ਕਾ ਮਨੁ ਮਾਨਿਆ ॥  
ਨਾਨਕ ਤਿਨਹਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨੁ ਜਾਨਿਆ ॥੨੮॥

"Whosoever's mind is attuned to the Name, shall know the pure one."

Naam Dev ji also advises, that one should engage oneself in all the worldly activities, and yet inwardly remain centred upon Him:

ਨਾਮਾ ਕਹੈ ਤਿਲੋਚਨਾ ਮੁਖ ਤੇ ਰਾਮ ਸੰਮ੍ਭਾਲਿ ॥  
ਹਾਥ ਪਾਉ ਸਤ ਕਾਮੁ ਕਰ ਚੀਤੁ ਨਿਰੰਜਨ ਨਾਲਿ ॥੨੯੩॥

Naam Dev ji tells Trilochan, (his disciple), to recite Ram's name by his mouth and keep the hands and feet busy in whatever he is doing, while the mind remains tuned to the Lord.

Several Bhagats and Gurus, whose compositions are included in Guru Granth Sahib, have used picturesque similes to drive their point home. Guru Nanak Dev ji gives the love of the lotus plant or of the fish with water, both of which are happier when deeper in water. Naam Dev ji gives the examples of the following :

- a) A boy flying a kite in the sky talking to his friends and yet, never losing sight of the kite.
- b) Girls carrying pitchers of water on their heads and walking towards their homes from the village well, laughing and talking with each other, but never forgetting the pitcher.
- c) The child playing in the cot and the mother busy in her household chores, keeping her ears tuned towards the child.

Guru Arjan Dev ji says:

ਇਕੁ ਪਲੁ ਖਿਨੁ ਬਿਸਰਹਿ ਤੂ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਜਾਨਦਿ ਬਰਸ ਪਚਾਸਾ ॥

"If I forget you even for a fraction of a second, it feels as if I have not remembered you for fifty years." Such is the intensity of his love for the Divine.

Guru Nanak Dev ji has summed up the advantage of 'naam simran' in Jap ji:

ਭਰੀਐ ਮਤਿ ਪਾਪ ਕੈ ਸੰਗਿ ॥  
ਓਹੁ ਧੋਪੈ ਨਾਵੈ ਕੈ ਰੰਗਿ ॥

"A mind full of sin can be purified only by the love of Name."

Guru Arjan Dev ji says:

ਸਰਬ ਰੋਗ ਕਾ ਅਉਖਦੁ ਨਾਮੁ ॥

"The Name is the panacea for all ailments."

Through 'naam simran' one succeeds in getting rid of ego, fears, worries, doubts, attachments, and sins. At the same time one acquires supreme peace, love for the Divine and His creation, joy and happiness and also good health. The cycle of births and deaths is destroyed and one merges with the Supreme Spirit after self is cognized within.

Another popular and effective way of doing 'naam simran' is doing 'kirtan' in a group, that is in 'sangat'. Its advantages are manifold, because due to the participation of several persons, vibrations increase manifold. It is just like lighting, say, forty candles instead of only one, which increases the light for every one, forty times. Guru Arjan Dev ji particularly stressed this method and gave his own example by mentioning all the various efforts made by him but succeeding in subduing the mind only through 'kirtan'.

It has already been pointed out that in the whole of Guru Granth Sahib, hymns have been arranged in various 'ragas'.

Traditionally 'kirtan' has been the most prominent as well as important way in which the glories of the Lord are sung. Guru Nanak Dev ji himself started this way of remembering the Lord with love and devotion. This was continued by all the Gurus, and the tradition is being kept up till today in all the Gurdwaras throughout the world.

### **How Much Do You Remember?**

#### I. Answer the following questions:

1. What do 'Naam' and 'Simran' stand for?
2. Do we absorb the qualities of someone we admire?
3. Why has 'naam simran' been regarded as one of the most powerful techniques for developing inward look?
4. 'Naam simran' is similar to what a farmer does in preparing his field for crop. How?
5. Write about the technique of 'naam simran' in your own words.
6. How can one realize God who is beyond our organs of sense?
7. What are the different examples given by the Gurus and Bhagats to drive home, the point of keeping the mind attuned to the Lord all the time?
8. "The Name is the panacea for all aliments," says Guru Arjan Dev ji. Explain how?
9. 'Kirtan' is another way of doing 'naam simran'. Explain the statement in your own words.
10. Who started the tradition of 'kirtan'?

#### II. Something to do

The divinity teacher should help the students practice the art of achieving peace and stability through 'naam Simran'.



## **APPENDIX**

### **DIRECTORY OF GURDWARAS AROUND THE WORLD**

#### **SIKH TEMPLE**

Dashmesh Darbar  
97-A Rosebery Avenue,  
Manor Park,  
London E-12 6PT, UK

#### **SIKH TEMPLE**

Sikh Sangat, London East  
Francis Road, Leyton  
London E-10, UK

**GURU HAR RAI SIKH TEMPLE**  
126-128 High Street, West  
Bromwich, West Midlands, UK

**GURU NANAK GURDWARA**  
65-67 Walsall Road  
Willenhall WV13, 2RD  
West Midlands, UK

#### **SIKH TEMPLE**

Ramgarhia Community Centre  
Masons Hill  
Woolwich, SE 18 6EJ, UK

**GURU NANAK SIKH TEMPLE**  
West Bromwich Street  
Caldmore, Walsall  
West Midlands WS1 4DE, UK

**RAMGARHIA SIKH TEMPLE**  
1103 Foleshill Road  
Coventry CV6 6EP, UK

#### **SIKH TEMPLE**

Singh Sabha London East  
North Street, Barking,  
Essex IG11 6JD, UK

#### **SRI GURU NANAK DEV JI**

GURDWARA  
Monton St., Moss Side  
Manchester M14 4LS, UK

#### **SIKH TEMPLE**

North Street, Swindon  
Wiltshire, UK

**HACIENDA DE GURU RAM DAS**  
**GURDWARA**

Espanola, New Mexico, USA

**SIKH DHARMA OF**  
**MASSACHUSETTS GURDWARA**  
368 Village Street  
Millis, MA 02054, USA

**SIKH TEMPLE SACRAMENTO**  
2301 Evergreen Avenue  
West Sacramento  
California 95691, USA

**SIKH TEMPLE SAN JOSE**  
10th Street Down Town  
San Jose, California, USA

**GURDWARA SAHIB**  
Quimby, White Road  
San Jose, California, USA

**SIKH GURDWARA OF LOS**  
**ANGELES**  
7640 Lankershim Blvd.  
North Hollywood  
California CA 91605, USA

**SRI GURU NANAK SIKH TEMPLE**  
2269 Bogue Road, Yuba City  
California CA 95992, USA

**SIKH TEMPLE RIVERSIDE**  
7940 Mission Blvd., Riverside  
California, USA

**SIKH TEMPLE**  
1966 N.Vermont Avenue  
Los Angeles  
California CA 90027, USA

**SIKH TEMPLE OF NORTH TEXAS**  
506 Gatewood Drive  
Garland, TX 75043, USA

**SIKH TEMPLE FREMONT**  
San Francis Bay Area 300  
Hill Side Avenue, Fremont  
California, USA

**SIKH TEMPLE GRINDLEY-LIVE OAK**  
9939 P.Street  
Live Oak CA 95953, USA

**GURU NANAK GURDWARA**  
2302 North 9th Street  
Phoenix AZ 85006, USA

**GURU RAM DAS GURDWARA**  
1620 Preuss Road, P.O.Box  
351149 Los Angeles  
California 90035, USA

**GURU NANAK SIKH TEMPLE**  
8302 Whitakar Avenue  
Buena Park,  
California CA 90621, USA

**SRI GURU SINGH SABHA OF LOS ANGELES**  
101 South Chappel Avenue  
Alhambra Los Angeles  
California CA 91801, USA

**SRI GURU SINGH SABHA**  
7280 Airport Road  
Missisauga, Ontario, CANADA

**GURU GOBIND SINGH TEMPLE**  
443 Kelly Street  
Prince George, B.C., CANADA

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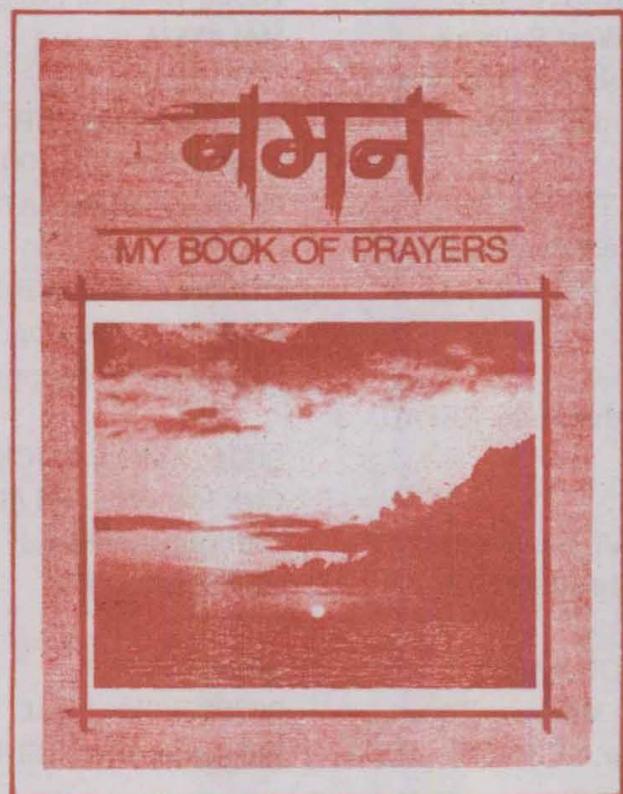
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